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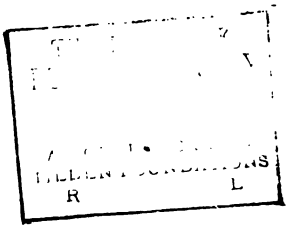

Mary Stuart, at Lochleven Castle, forced to sign her abdication.—MARY STUART.

ALEXANDRE DUMAS

CELEBRATED CRIMES

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1895

GEORGE BARRIE'S SONS

MARY STUART

CELEBRATED CRIMES

MARY STUART

1587

There are certain names which seem predestined to ill-fortune when borne by those of royal race.

Such an one the name of Henri has been in France. Henri I. was poisoned, Henri II. was killed in a tournament, Henri III. and Henri IV. were assassinated. As to Henri V., whose past has been so sorrow-laden, God alone knows what the future has in store for him.

In Scotland the name of Stuart has had a similar destiny. Robert I. founder of the race, died at twenty-eight in a decline. Robert II., the most fortunate of the family, was compelled to pass part of his life in darkness which was worse than exile, because of an inflammation of the eyes which made them red as blood. Robert III. sank beneath the sorrow caused by the death of one of his sons and the captivity of the other. James I. was stabbed by Graham in the Monastery of the Black Monks at Perth. James II. was killed at the siege of Roxburgh by the bursting of a cannon. James III. was assassinated by an unknown man in a mill in which he had taken shelter after the battle of Sauchieburn.

James IV., wounded by two arrows and a blow from a halberd, died surrounded by his nobility on Flodden Field. James V. died of grief for the loss of his two sons, and of remorse for having caused the execution of Hamilton. James VI., who was destined to wear the double crown of England and Scotland, was the son of a murdered father, and dragged out a melancholy, timorous existence between the scaffold of his mother, Mary Stuart, and that of his son, Charles I. Charles II. passed part of his life in exile. James II. died there. The Chevalier St. George, after he had been proclaimed King of Scotland under the name of James VIII., and of England and Ireland under that of James III., was obliged to flee without even the glory of a defeat. Charles Edward, his son, after the affray at Derby, and the battle of Culloden, was hunted from mountain to mountain, from rock to rock, and from one river's bank to the other, until he made his escape, half naked, aboard a French vessel, and finally went to Florence where he died without being recognized as a sovereign by any of the courts of Europe. Lastly, his brother, Henry Benedict, the last descendant of the race, lived on a pension of three thousand pounds sterling paid by George III., and died, utterly forgotten, bequeathing to the House of Hanover the crown jewels which James II. took with him when he crossed over to the continent in 1688; a tardy, but complete acknowledgment of the legitimacy of the family, which supplanted his own.

Of this unhappy race Mary Stuart was the most ill-used plaything of fate. Brantôme said of her: "Those who are moved to write concerning this illustrious Queen of Scotland, have two subjects on which much can be said—her life, and her death." Brantôme, it should be said, knew her at one of the saddest periods

of her whole life—just as she was leaving France for Scotland.

It was on the ninth of August, 1561, that Mary Stuart, having lost her husband and mother in the same year, Queen Dowager of France and Queen of Scotland at nineteen, arrived at Calais, under the escort of her uncles, the Cardinals de Guise and de Lorraine, the Duc and Duchesse de Guise, the Duc d'Aumale and M. de Nemours. There two galleys were waiting to take her over to Scotland, one commanded by M. de Mévillon, and the other by Captain Albize. She remained six days at Calais. On the fifteenth of the same month, after most sorrowful farewells to her kinsfolk, she embarked on M. de Mévillon's galley, accompanied by MM. d'Aumale, d'Elbœuf, and Damville, with many noblemen, among whom were Brantôme and Chatelard. M. de Mévillon was ordered to put to sea at once, and did so with the help of his sweeps, for the wind was so light that the sails were of no use.

Mary Stuart was, at this time, in all the flower of her beauty, which was increased in splendor by her mourning garb; beauty so marvelous it was, that it diffused a charm which no one of those whom she sought to please ever escaped, and which was fatal to most of them. A *chanson* was written concerning her about this time, which was admitted, even by her rivals, to keep well within the truth. It was the production, so it was said, of M. de Maison-Fleur, a gallant with a pretty taste both for letters and for arms.

L'on voit sous blanc atour,
  En grand deuil et tristesse,
Se promener maint tour
  De beuté la déesse;
Tenant le trait en main
  De son fils inhumain;

Et l'amour sans fronteau
Volêter autour d'elle,
Deguisant son bandeau
Sous sun funebre voile
Où sont ces mots ecrits;
"Mourir on être près."

At the moment of her departure, Mary Stuart, clad in full mourning garb of white, seemed lovelier than ever; great tears coursed silently down her cheeks, as she stood at the stern, she whose heart was broken at having to depart, waving her handkerchief in farewell to those whose hearts were broken at having to remain behind.

Within half an hour they had left the harbor and were fairly out at sea. Suddenly Mary heard shrieks of distress astern of the galley. A vessel which was coming into port under full sail, had struck upon a hidden rock, through the blundering of the pilot; a large hole was opened in her bottom, she trembled and moaned a moment like a wounded man, then began to fill amid the shrieks of her crew. Mary stood pale and speechless, horrified beyond measure, watching her as she gradually sank out of sight, while the crew, as the hull went down, ran up the shrouds and into the yards to prolong their agony a few moments; at last hull, yards, masts, all were swallowed up in the yawning maw of the ocean. A black spot appeared here and there upon the surface of the water, but it was for an instant only; one by one they disappeared, the waves chased one another over the spot, and the spectators of the tragic scene, when they saw how calm and solitary the ocean was, as if nothing had happened, wondered if it were not an unreal vision which had appeared and vanished.

"Alas!" cried Mary, falling back into a sitting position, with her arms upon the taffrail, "what a sad omen

for so sad a journey!" Then she looked once more at the fast lessening shore, and her eyes which horror had dried for a moment filled with tears anew. "Adieu, France," she murmured, "adieu France!" and for five hours she sat thus, weeping and murmuring: "Adieu, France! adieu, France!"

The night fell, and her grief increased; as the objects on shore became indistinguishable in the darkness, and she was summoned below to supper, she rose to her feet, saying: "Now, dear France, I really lose thee forever, when jealous night heaps mourning upon mourning by drawing a veil before my eyes. Adieu, then, dear, dear France, and for the last time, for I shall never see thee more."

With these words she went below, observing that, whereas Dido after the departure of Æneas gazed ceaselessly at the waves, she, on the contrary, could not tear her eyes away from the shore.

Her companions formed a circle about her, and sought to console her and distract her thoughts. But her grief overcame her more and more: she could not reply for her voice was choked with sobs, and she scarcely ate at all. She ordered a bed to be prepared in the after-cabin, sent for the helmsman and told him to wake her at the first peep of dawn, if the land was still in sight. Upon this point Mary was favored by fortune, for the wind died away, and when day broke the galley was still in sight of land.

Mary was overjoyed when she was aroused by the helmsman, who had not forgotten the orders he had received, and, sitting up in bed, she saw through the open porthole the shore which she loved so well. But about five o'clock the wind freshened and the galley progressed so rapidly that the French coast soon disappeared entirely. Then

Mary fell back upon her bed, pale as death, murmuring once more: "Adieu France! I shall never see thee more."

In very truth, the happiest years of her life were passed in the France which she regretted so bitterly. Born during the first religious commotions, by the bedside of her dying father, the atmosphere of gloom and mourning in which she was cradled was destined to surround her to her dying day, and her brief sojourn in France was like a ray of sunshine in the darkness. Slandered from her very birth she was, and the report was so generally circulated that she was physically deformed and could not live, that her mother, Marie de Guise, in her annoyance at the malicious reports, took her out of her swaddling clothes one day, and exhibited her as God made her, to the English Ambassador, who had asked her hand, on behalf of King Henry VIII., for the Prince of Wales, who was himself but five years old. Crowned at the age of nine months by Cardinal Beaton, Archbishop of St. Andrews, she was immediately secluded in Stirling Castle by her mother, who feared treachery on the part of the English king. Two years after she became distrustful of the security afforded by that fortress, and transferred her to an island in Lake Menteith, where an old monastery, the only building on the spot, afforded protection to the royal child and to four young girls born the same year as she, all of whom bore the same sweet name which in French (*Marie*) forms an anogram of the verb to love (*aimer*); they were called the queen's "Marys," and were destined never to leave her in good or ill fortune. They were Mary Fleming, Mary Livingston, Mary Beaton and Mary Seaton. She remained in the monastery until she was taken to Dumbarton Castle on her way to France after the Scotch

Parliament had given its sanction to her marriage with the dauphin son of Henry II. There she was turned over to M. de Brézé who came on behalf of Henry II. to escort her to France. They set sail upon French galleys, which were waiting at the mouth of the Clyde, and after being hotly pursued by the English fleet entered the harbor of Brest on the 15th of August, 1548, a year after the death of François I.

Besides the Queen's four Marys the little fleet also bore to France three of her natural brothers, including the Prior of St. Andrews, James Stuart, who was at a later period to abjure the Catholic faith, and to wield a blighting influence upon Mary's destiny, as Regent of Scotland under the title of Earl Murray.

From Brest, Mary was escorted to Saint-Germain-en-Laye, where Henri II., who had but recently mounted the throne, welcomed her with the utmost affection, and sent her to a convent where the heiresses of the noblest families were sent to receive their education. There Mary's happy temperament developed rapidly. Born with a woman's heart and a man's brain, Mary not only acquired all the accomplishments which properly formed part of the education of a future queen, but she became proficient in the exact sciences which are supposed to fall within the province of none but learned doctors. At the age of fourteen she pronounced a Latin discourse of her own composition in one of the great halls of the Louvre, before Henri II., Catherine de Medicis and all the court, maintaining that it was a becoming thing for women to cultivate a taste for letters, and that it was as unjust and tyrannical to confine the education of young girls to social accomplishments, as it would be to deprive flowers of their perfume. We can readily understand what manner of reception a future queen, advancing

such a theory, was likely to meet with at the most literary and most pedantic court in Europe. Between the literature of Rabelais and Marot, whose sun was just sinking, and that of Ronsard and Montaigne, who were at the zenith of their popularity, Mary became the queen of poetry, and would have been only to happy to wear no other crown than that which Ronsard, Debellay, Maison—Fleur and Brantôme placed every day upon her head. But her fate was preordained. In the midst of the fêtes which dying chivalry was trying to rehabilitate, came the fatal jousting at the Tournelles: Henri II., struck with a lance head in the face, was laid prematurely beside his ancestors, and Mary Stuart ascended the throne of France, where she laid aside her mourning for Henri, only to assume it again for her mother, and was called upon to lament the death of her husband before her tears for her mother's death had ceased to flow.

Mary was doubly afflicted by this latest loss, as wife and as poet: her heart overflowed in bitter tears and melodious lamentations. These are the lines which she wrote at that time:

En mon triste et doux chant,
D'un ton fort lamentable,
Je jette un deuil tranchant
De perte incomparable,
Et en soupirs cuisans
Passe mes meilleurs ans.

Fut-il un tel malheur
De dure destinée,
Ni si triste douleur
De dame fortunée
Qui mon cœur et mon œil
Vois en bière et cercueil?

Qui dans mon doux printemps
Et fleur de ma jeunesse,
Toutes les peines sens
D'une extrême tristesse,

Et en rien n'ai plaisir
Qu'en regret et désir.

Ce qui m'étoit plaisant
Ue devient peine dure:
Le jour le plus luisant
Est pour moi nuit obscure,
Et n'est rien si exquis
Qui de moi soit requis.

J'ai au cœur et à l'œil
Un portrait, une image,
Qui figure mon deuil
Sur mon pale visage
De violettes teint,
Qui est l'amoureux teint.

Pour mon mal estranger,
Je ne m'arrête en place;
Mais j'en ai beau changer,
Si ma douleur n'efface;
Car mon pis et mon mieux
Sont les plus déserts lieux,

Si en quelque sejour,
Soit en bois, soit en prée,
Soit sur l'aube du jour,
Ou soit sur la vesprée,
Sans cesse mon cœur sent
Le regret d'un absent.

Si par fois vers les cieux
Viens adresser ma vue,
Le doux trait de ses yeux
Je vois en une nue;
Si les baisse vers l'eau,
Vois comme en une tombeau.

Si je suis en repos,
Sommeillant sur ma couche,
J'oy qu'il me tiênt propos,
Je le seus qu'il me touche;
En labeur, en recoy
Toujours est pres de moy.

Je ne vois autre objet,
Si beau qu'il se présente,
A qui que soit subjet
Oncques mon cœur consente;
Exempt de perfection
A cette affection.

Mets chauson icy fin
A si triste complainte
Dont sera le refrain
Amour vraie et mon feinte,
Qui, pour separation,
N'aura diminution.

"At that time," says Brantôme "she was very beautiful to look upon, for the soft whiteness of her face struggled for supremacy with the whiteness of her veil; but at last, the veil, being the work of man, was forced to yield, and the snowy pallor of her cheeks carried off the prize. For I never saw her otherwise than very pale," he adds, "from the first day of her widowhood so long as I had the honor to form one of her suite in France, and afterwards in Scotland, whither she was obliged to go after eighteen months, to her very great regret to pacify her kingdom, torn by religious faction. Alas! she had neither inclination nor desire to go thither, and I have often heard her say that she dreaded the journey like death itself; for she would have preferred a hundred times over to remain in France, as simple Queen Dowager, and to be content with Touraine and Poitou for her dowry, rather than to reign in her savage realm yonder. But Messieurs, her uncles (some of them, at least, but not all), advised her to go, and even urged it upon her, and afterwards repented at leasure of their rash haste.

Mary obeyed, as we have seen, and her voyage began under such sorrowful auspices that when she lost sight of the land she thought her last day had come. It was then that these well-known lines exhaled from that poetic soul:

Adieu, plaisant pays de France,
O'ma patrie
La plus chérie,
Qui as nourri ma jeune enfance!

Adieu, France! adieu mex beaux jours,
La nef qui disjoint nos amours,
N'a en de moi que la moitié;
Une part te reste, elle est tienne;
Je la fie à ton amitié,
Pour que de l'autre il t'e souvienne.

This half of herself which Mary left in France was the body of the young King, who took all poor Mary's happiness with him to the tomb.

The one hope left to Mary was that the sight of an English fleet would compel her little squadron to return; but her destiny was written and must be fulfilled. A fog, of extraordinary density for the season, enveloped the whole Channel throughout the day, and under its cover the galleys eluded the English cruisers; the fog was actually so thick that the mast could not be seen from the stern sheets. It lasted all day Sunday—they weighed anchor on the Saturday—and did not rise until Monday morning at eight o'clock. The little fleet, which had steered at random during all this time, was found to be in the midst of such a wilderness of reefs that one or more of the galleys would certainly have struck, and have gone down like the vessel they saw as they were leaving Calais, if the fog had lasted a few moments longer.

When it finally lifted, the pilot recognized the Scotch coast, and guiding his vessels through the reefs with great skill, he made a landing at Leith, where no preparations had been made to receive the Queen.

She had no sooner put her foot on shore, however, than the principal men of the town got together and came to offer her their congratulations. Meanwhile they were collecting a few wretched nags whose harnesses were falling in pieces, to take the Queen to Edinburgh. At sight of them Mary's tears flowed

afresh; for she thought of the beautiful palfreys and showy hackneys of the cavaliers and ladies of her suite in France, while Scotland was revealed to her at the first glance in all its wretchedness. The next day she was to obtain a glimpse of it in all its ferocity.

After passing the night at Holyrood Castle, "where" says Bantôme, "five or six scoundrels came from the city and entertained her with an ear-splitting serenade upon wretched violins and rebecks instead of letting her sleep, she expressed a desire to hear mass." Unfortunately the people of Edinburgh belonged almost wholly to the Reformed religion; they were enraged that the Queen should begin her reign with this proof of popery, and made their way into the chapel by force, armed with knives and sticks and stones, with the purpose of putting to death the poor priest who acted as her chaplain. He left the altar and ran to her for protection, while Mary's brother, the Prior of St. Andrews, who was much more inclined at this time to the military profession than the ecclesiastical, declared that he would strike down with his own hand the first man who came a step nearer. His firmness, in conjunction with the dignified and imposing demeanor of the Queen, arrested the zeal of the converts of Calvin.

As we have said, Mary arrived in Scotland when the first religious disturbances were at fever heat. A zealous Catholic, like all her mother's family, her presence aroused the gravest fears among the Huguenots. The report was circulated that, instead of landing at Leith as the fog had forced her to do, her purpose had been to land at Aberdeen, where she would have found the Earl of Huntly awaiting her; and Huntly was not only one of those peers who had remained faithful to the Catholic religion, but was, next to the Hamiltons, the nearest and

most powerful connection of the royal family. Supported by him and twenty thousand soldiers from the north, she would then have marched upon Edinburgh, and re-established Catholicism from one end of Scotland to the other. Events were not slow in proving the falsity of that charge.

Mary was very fond of the Prior of St. Andrews, who was the son of James V. and a noble lady of the house of Mar. She had been very beautiful in her younger days, and in spite of James' well-known passion for her, and the child which was the result of it, she had married Lord Douglas of Lochleven, by whom she had two other sons, half-brothers of the regent, the elder of whom was named William and the other George. Mary was not fairly seated upon the throne when she bestowed upon the Prior of Saint Andrews the title of Earl of Mar, which was that of his maternal ancestors; and as the Earldom of Murray had been extinct since the death of the famous Thomas Randolph, Mary, in her sisterly affection for James Stuart, soon added that distinction to those with which she had already honored him.

But at this point matters became more complicated; for the new Earl of Murray, whose character is well-known, was not the man to be content with the title minus the estates; now the estates, which fell in to the crown when the male line of the old earls became extinct, had been gradually encroached upon by powerful neighbors, among whom was the celebrated Earl of Huntly, whom we mentioned a moment ago. The result was that, as the Queen thought it probable that her commands would meet with some opposition in that direction, she put herself at the head of a small army, commanded by her brother, the Earl of Mar and

Murray, and marched north on the pretext of a visit to her possessions there.

The Earl of Huntly was the less likely to be the dupe of this alleged pretext inasmuch as his son, John Gordon, had just been sentenced to a term of imprisonment for some trifling abuse of authority which he had committed. He adopted, however, a most submissive attitude towards the Queen, sent messengers to meet her and invite her to break her journey at his castle, and followed the messengers in person to renew the invitation with his own lips. Unfortunately, at the very moment when he joined the Queen, the governor of Inverness, who was a retainer of his, refused to allow Mary to enter Inverness Castle, although it was a royal castle. Murray, to be sure, had already ordered his head cut off on the charge of high treason, being satisfied that there was no profit in bargaining with rebellions of that sort.

This fresh display of the firm hand proved to Huntly's satisfaction that the young Queen did not propose to allow the great lords to resume the almost sovereign power which her father had humbled. For that reason, and notwithstanding the hearty welcome he received, when he learned in the Queen's camp that his son had escaped from prison and put himself at the head of his vassals, he feared that he should be suspected of being privy to this step, as he doubtless was; so he left secretly that same night to take command of his troops, determined to try the hazard of a battle, as Mary had no more than seven or eight thousand men with her. He declared, however, as Buccleuch did when he tried to wrest James V. from the hands of Douglas, that he had no designs upon the Queen, but upon the Regent alone,

who kept her under the closest tutelage, and perverted her good intentions.

Murray, who was well aware that the tranquillity of a whole reign often depends upon the degree of firmness displayed at its inception, immediately called upon all the northern barons whose estates were in the vicinity of his own, to take the field against Huntly: they all obeyed, for the Gordons were so powerful already that the apprehension of their becoming more so was widespread. It was very apparent, nevertheless, that with their hatred for the vassal there was mingled no great affection for the Queen, and that most of them came without settled purpose, other than to let circumstances control their action.

The two armies met near Aberdeen: Murray immediately stationed the troops he had brought from Edinburgh, of whom he was sure, on top of a hill, and arranged all his northern allies on the sides of the hill in echelons. Huntly advanced upon his Highland neighbors with resolute front, and after a brief resistance they fell back in disorder. His men at once threw away their lances and rushed after the fleeing Highlanders with drawn swords, crying: "Gordon! Gordon?" They thought that the battle was already theirs, when they suddenly found themselves confronted by Murray's main body, who stood like a rock, and with their long lances made sad havoc of their adversaries who were armed with claymores only. So the Gordons had to fall back in their turn, whereupon the northern clans rallied and returned to the battle, each man having a spray of heather in his cap, as a mark by which his comrades could identify him. This unexpected onset was decisive of the result: the Highlanders poured down the hill in a resistless flood, carrying with them all who undertook

to oppose their rush. Then Murray saw that the moment had come to change the defeat into a rout, and charged down the hill with all his cavalry: Huntly, who was very stout and clad in very heavy armor, fell and was trampled to death under the horses' feet; John Gordon was made prisoner and had his head cut off at Aberdeen three days later: and his brother who was too young to undergo similar punishment at that time, was closely confined in a dungeon, and executed on the day he completed his sixteenth year.

Mary was present at the battle, and her tranquil and courageous demeanor made a deep impression upon her savage defenders, who heard her say again and again that she wished she were a man, to pass her days in the saddle and her nights under a tent, to wear a coat of mail upon her body, a helmet on her head, a shield on her arm, and a broadsword at her side.

She entered Edinburgh amid general enthusiasm, for her expedition against the Earl of Huntly, who was a Catholic, was very popular with the people of that city, who did not understand the real motives which had caused it to be undertaken. They were of the Reformed religion, and the Earl was a Papist: they had gone no farther into the subject than that.

In the midst of their acclamations the good Scotchmen expressed, both verbally and by written petitions, their earnest desire that the Queen, who had had no children by François II., should marry again. Mary made no objection to that, and in accordance with the sound advice of those who were about her, she resolved to consult Elizabeth upon the subject of her marriage: for, being Henry VII.'s grand-daughter she was next in succession to the throne of England if the Queen should die without issue. Unhappily she had not always acted

with the like circumspection; for at the death of Mary Tudor, called "Bloody Mary," she laid claim to the throne on the ground of the alleged illegitimacy of Elizabeth, and she and the Dauphin assumed the titles of King and Queen of England, Scotland and Ireland, and caused coins to be struck bearing those titles, and the armorial bearings of those countries to be engraved upon their plate.

Elizabeth was only nine years older than Mary, which is equivalent to saying that at this time she was still under thirty: so that the two were rivals, not as Queens alone, but as women. In the matter of education, Elizabeth had nothing to fear from comparison, for if there was less of the fascination in her wit, there was more solidity in her judgments: she was well versed in politics, philosophy, history, oratory, poetry and music, and beside her native tongue she spoke and wrote perfectly in Greek, Latin, French, Italian and Spanish. But if she was Mary's superior in this direction, Mary was far more beautiful, and vastly more attractive than her rival. Elizabeth, it is true, was majestic in her bearing, and pleasant to look upon: her eyes were bright and keen, and her complexion dazzlingly white: but her hair was red and she had large feet* and hands, Mary, on the other hand, had beautiful chestnut hair†, and a noble forehead; her eyebrows were open to no other reproach than that of being arched with such precision of line, that they seemed to be drawn with a brush; from her eyes the most potent of love philters

* Elizabeth presented a pair of her shoes to the University of Oxford: their size would indicate that they were made for a man of medium height.

† Several historians assert that Mary Stuart's hair was black, but Brantôme, who, as we have said, accompanied her to Scotland, and must often have seen it, says that she had chestnut hair.

poured in an endless stream; her nose was shaped after the purest Grecian model; her mouth so rosy and smiling, that it seemed as if it ought never to open save to whisper soft words, as a flower opens only to emit its perfume, and her neck as white and graceful as a swan's: add to all this, hands of the whiteness of alabaster, feet like a child's, and the shape of a goddess, and the result was a perfect whole, in which the most fanatical connoisseur could find no flaw.

Therein lay Mary's real crime: had there been but one blemish in her face or form, she had never perished on the scaffold.

Her beauty was to Elizabeth, who had never seen her, and consequently could judge of it only by hearsay, a fruitful source of uneasiness and jealousy which she was quite unable to conceal, and which were constantly displayed by peevish questions and testy remarks. One day she was talking familiarly with James Melville concerning the object of his mission to her court, which was to ask Elizabeth's advice concerning the choice of a consort. The Queen, whose first impulse was to urge the selection of the Earl of Leicester, led the Scottish Ambassador into a sort of study, where she showed him several portraits, with the names written in her own hand. The first was Leicester's. As this nobleman was selected by Elizabeth as a claimant to Mary's hand, Melville asked her to give him the portrait to show his mistress: but Elizabeth refused, saying that it was the only one she had. Melville suggested with a smile that as she had the original she could get along without the copy, but nothing would induce her to consent to part with it.

When this little discussion was at an end, she showed him a picture of Mary Stuart, which she kissed with a

great show of affection, expressing to Melville her great longing to see his mistress.

"It's an easy thing to do, Madame," he replied; "pretend to keep your room on the ground of indisposition, and go *incog.* to Scotland, as James V. went to France when the fancy took him to see Madeline de Valois, whom he afterward married.

"Alas!" Elizabeth rejoined, "I should like it above all things, but it's not so easy as you think. Tell your Queen, however, that I love her dearly, and that I hope we shall live on closer terms of frendship hereafter than we have done hitherto. Come, Melville," she continued, passing to a subject which she had evidently been longing to broach for some time, "tell me frankly, is my sister as beautiful as they say?"

"She is considered to be very beautiful," said Melville; "but I cannot give Your Majesty any satisfactory idea on the subject, as I have nothing to compare her with."

"I will give you something," said the Queen; "is she more beautiful than I am?"

"Madame," rejoined Melville, "you are the most beautiful woman in England, and Mary Stuart in Scotland."

"But which of us is the taller," persisted Elizabeth, not entirely satisfied with the reply, clever as it was.

"My mistress, Madame," said Mellville; "I am forced to admit that."

"Then she's too tall," said Elizabeth pettishly, "for I am as tall as any woman ought to be. What are her favorite recreations?" she went on.

"Hunting, Madame, riding, and playing on the lute and harpsichord."

"Does she play well on the last?" queried Elizabeth.

"Why, yes, Madame," Melville replied; "very well for a queen."

The conversation went no farther; but as Elizabeth was an accomplished musician she instructed Lord Hunsdon to bring Melville to her apartments when she was at her harpsichord, so that he might hear her playing when she would not appear to be performing for his benefit. The same day Hunsdon, in obedience to his instructions, escorted the ambassador to a gallery which was separated from the Queen's apartment by tapestry hangings only; so that, when his guide raised them, Melville could listen to her at his ease. She did not turn until she had finished the piece she was playing—and playing with much skill and expression, be it said. When she saw Melville she pretended to be very angry, and even threatened to strike him; but her passion gave way little by little to the ambassador's compliments, and vanished altogether when he admitted that Mary was not her equal in that regard.

But Elizabeth did not stop there; she was so proud of her triumph that she determined that Melville should see her dance; so she held back his dispatches two days to enable him to be present at a ball which she gave. These dispatches, as we have said, expressed a desire that Mary should marry Leicester; but such a proposition could not be taken seriously. Leicester, whose personal merit was of the slightest, was of too humble birth to aspire to the hand of the daughter of so many kings. Mary replied that such an alliance could not be looked upon as a suitable one for her to enter into.

Meanwhile a strange and tragic incident took place at court.

Among the noblemen who had followed Mary Stuart to Scotland was one whose name we have already

mentioned,—a young man named Chastelard. He was a nephew of Chevalier Bayard through his mother, and was a perfect type of the nobility of the age—a poet and knight-errant, endowed with manifold talents, and of proved gallantry. He was a member of Maréchal Damville's household, and by virtue of that eminent position, had paid court to Mary Stuart during the whole of her stay in France. She saw in the homage which he paid her, mostly in rhyme, nothing more than the poetical declarations of devotion which were customary at that time, and with which she, more than all others, was overwhelmed every day. Now it came about that her fate compelled her to leave France just when Chastelard was most deeply in love with her. Maréchal Damville, who had been encouraged by Mary's gracious demeanor to enter the lists as a candidate for the succession to Francis II., and who knew nothing of Chastelard's passion, set out for Scotland with the poor exile, and took Chastelard with him; and, without the least suspicion that he had a rival in him, he made him the confidant of his own passion, and left him with Mary when he was obliged to be away, enjoining him to watch over his patron's interests.

This post of confidant brought Chastelard still nearer to Mary; and as the Queen treated him, in his capacity of poet, like a brother, his passion emboldened him to the point of risking everything to gain the right to another title. Consequently he stole into the Queen's room one evening, and hid under the bed; but just as she was beginning to undress, a little dog belonging to her began to yelp so furiously that the women came running in, and easily discovered Chastelard. A woman readily forgives an offence for which too great love is the excuse; Mary Stuart was more woman than queen,

and she forgave. But her kindness had no other effect than to increase Chastelard's confidence; he attributed the rebuke he received to the presence of the Queen's women, and fancied that if she had been alone, her forgiveness would have been even more complete.

Three weeks later the same scene was re-enacted; but this time Chastelard, detected hiding in a wardrobe when the Queen was in bed, was handed over to the guards.

The moment was ill-chosen; such a scandal, occurring just as Mary was on the point of marrying again, would have been fatal to her, unless it had been fatal to Chastelard. Murray took the affair in hand and, deeming that a public trial alone could save his sister's reputation, he pressed the prosecution so vigorously that Chastelard was convicted of the crime of *lèse-majesté*, and condemned to death. Mary made a feeble attempt to induce her brother to send him back to France; but Murray pointed out to her the terrible consequences which might flow from such an exercise of the pardoning power, and Mary was forced to let the law take its course. So Chastelard's doom was sealed.

When he was standing upon the scaffold, which was erected in front of the Queen's palace, Chastelard, who had declined the services of a priest, asked that Ronsard's ode on Death might be read to him; he followed the reading with evident pleasure, and when it was at an end, he turned toward the Queen's windows, cried "Adieu, most beautiful and most cruel of princesses," and offered his neck to the executioner, without a word of repentance or complaint. His death made the deeper impression upon the Queen because she did not dare to express her sympathy openly.

Meanwhile the report had spread abroad that the Queen of Scotland was inclined to marry again, and

several aspirants came forward, among them scions of the most illustrious royal houses of Europe. In the first place, there was the Archduke Charles, third son of the Emperor of Germany; then there was the Infant of Spain, Don Carlos, who was afterwards put to death by his father; and the Duc d'Anjou, afterwards Henry III. But to marry a foreign prince was to renounce her right to the English throne, so Mary refused them all, and, claiming credit for her refusal with Elizabeth, she cast her eyes upon one of the English Queen's relatives, Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley, a son of the Earl of Lennox.

Elizabeth, who could find no plausible objection to the marriage, when Mary not only made choice of an Englishman, but came to Elizabeth's own family for her husband, allowed the Earl of Lennox and his son to visit the court of Scotland, reserving the right, if affairs should seem to be taking a serious turn, to order them both back to England; an order which they would be compelled to obey, as all their property was there.

Darnley was eighteen years old; he was handsome, well-made and a dandy; he was a master of that captivating jargon of the young courtiers of France and England, which Mary had not heard during her exile in Scotland; she allowed herself to be blinded by these external qualities, and did not discover that beneath this brilliant shell, Darnley concealed absolute intellectual nullity, doubtful courage, and a fickle and brutal temperament. It should be said that he was presented to her under the auspices of a man whose influence was as extraordinary as his elevation to the height which made it possible for him to exercise it. We refer to David Rizzio.

David Rizzio, who played so prominent a part in Mary Stuart's life, and whose extraordinary favor in her

sight, furnished her foes with such deadly weapons against her, without probable cause, was the son of a musician of Turin, who was burdened with a large family. His father, having observed in him a decided taste for music, taught him the rudiments of that art. At the age of fifteen he left home, and went afoot to Nice, where the Duke of Savoy was then holding his court. There he entered the services of the Duke of Moreto, and when that nobleman was appointed ambassador to Scotland some years later, Rizzio went with him to that kingdom. As he was gifted with a beautiful voice, and was also a skillful performer upon the violin and rebeck, accompanying himself in songs of which he composed both words and music, the ambassador spoke of him to Mary, who expressed a desire to see him. Rizzio, overflowing with self-confidence, saw in this desire of the Queen a means of pushing his own fortunes: he lost no time in obeying her command, and sang before her, to her great delight. She then asked Moreto to give him to her in much the same way that she might have asked him for a thoroughbred, or a well-trained falcon. Moreto was only too delighted with this opportunity of paying his court to her, and acceded to her request.

Rizzio had been but a short time in her service before Mary discovered that music was the least of his accomplishments, and that, outside of that, his learning was varied, to say the least, if not very deep; that he had a supple intellect and a lively imagination, and while his manners were gentle, he did not lack assurance and self-conceit. He reminded her of the Italian artists she had seen at the French court, and addressed her in the language of Marot and Ronsard, whose most beautiful poems he knew by heart: less than this would have made him welcome to Mary Stuart. In a very short

time he became her favorite, and as the office of secretary of dispatches became vacant most opportunely, Rizzio was installed in it.

Darnley, who was determined to succeed in his suit at all hazards, enlisted Rizzio in his interest, unaware that he stood in no need of his assistance: and as Mary, who had fallen in love with him at first sight, was led by her fear of some fresh intrigue on Elizabeth's part to hasten forward the marriage as much as the proprieties would permit, the arrangements were made with astounding rapidity. On the 29th of July, 1565, the marriage took place under the happiest auspices, to the great joy of the people and with the approval of the nobility, saving a small minority led by Murray. Two days before, Darnley and his father, the Earl of Lennox, received a command to return to London, and as they did not obey, they learned, a week after the wedding that the Countess of Lennox, the only one of the family who remained in Elizabeth's power, had been arrested and taken to the Tower. Thus Elizabeth, throwing aside dissimulation, yielded to the first violent impulse, which it always cost her a great effort to overcome, and made an open exhibition of her resentment.

She was not the woman, however, to be content with a mere empty revenge: so she soon released the countess, and fixed her eyes upon Murray, who was the most malcontent of all the malcontent noblemen, as his personal influence was entirely destroyed by the marriage. Under these circumstances it was not difficult for Elizabeth to induce him to take up arms. After an abortive attempt to get possession of Darnley's person, he summoned the Duc de Chatelherault, Glencairn, Argyle and Rothesay to join him; they collected as many of their partisans as they could, and took the field in open rebellion against

the Queen. This was the first overt demonstration of the hatred which was to have such fatal results for Mary. She, on her side, issued an appeal to her nobles, who were quick to respond, and to rally to her standard, so that she found herself, within a month, surrounded by the finest army that ever Scottish king had levied.

Darnley took the command of this magnificent force, mounted on a superb horse, encased in gilded armor, and accompanied by the Queen, in Amazonian garb and with pistols in her holsters: she had determined to make the campaign with him, so that she might not lose sight of him for an instant. They were both young, and both beautiful, and they rode out of Edinburgh amid the enthusiastic acclamations of the populace and the army.

Murray and his confederates made no attempt to make a stand against them, and the campaign consisted of marches and countermarches, so rapid and so complicated, that the insurrection was known as "*Run about Raid.*" Murray and the other rebels went over into England, where Elizabeth, while pretending to blame them for their rash undertaking, furnished them with all they stood in need of.

Mary returned to Edinburgh, overjoyed with the success of her first campaign, not dreaming that this fresh gift of fortune was the last she was to receive at the hands of the fickle dame, and that her brief season of prosperity had reached its limit. But she soon discovered that in Darnley she had taken unto herself, not as she supposed a gallant and assiduous consort, but an imperious and brutal master, who, having no further motive for hiding his real character from his wife's eyes, showed himself to her as he was, a slave of the most shameful vices, of which drunkenness and debauchery

were the least. Thus it came about that serious trouble soon arose in the royal ménage.

Darnley, when he married Mary, did not become king, but simply the Queen's consort. To confer upon him a degree of authority similar to that exercised by the Regent, it was necessary that Mary should bestow upon him what was called the crown matrimonial, which François II. had worn during his brief married life. But Mary had no intention of bestowing it upon Darnley, after his conduct to her. And so, however urgent his demands, and in whatever form he disguised them, she met them with an unvarying, persistent refusal. Darnley was amazed to find such strength of will in a young woman who had loved him enough to raise him to her level, and as he had no idea that its source was in her own breast, he set himself to find out by what secret, influential adviser it might be inspired. His suspicions fell upon Rizzio.

It is an indisputable fact, that, whatever may have been the true explanation of Rizzio's influence, (and this point has never been decided by the most impartial historians) whether he issued his commands as lover, or gave advice as minister, his voice, so long as he lived, was always given for the Queen's greatest glory. His origin was so humble that he was determined to show himself worthy to have risen so high, and to Mary before all others he tried to pay, in absolute devotion, all that he owed. Darnley, then, was not mistaken, and it was really Rizzio, who, in his despair at having done what he did to bring about a union which he foresaw would prove to be miserably unhappy, advised Mary not to yield one jot or tittle of her power, to one who already possessed more than he deserved in the possession of her person.

Darnley, like every man whose character is at once weak and headstrong, denied to others the quality of persistent will-power, unless sustained by some outside influence. He thought that by getting rid of Rizzio, he would surely remove the only obstacle to the success of his cause, because Rizzio alone, so he thought, was opposed to the bestowal upon him of the crown matrimonial, the object of his ardent desires. Owing to the fact that Rizzio was bitterly hated by the nobility because he had raised himself above them by his own merit, it was not difficult for Darnley to organize a conspiracy, and James Douglas of Morton, Chancellor of the Kingdom, consented to take the lead in it.

This is the second time, since we began this narrative that we have mentioned the name of Douglas, a name to be met with so frequently in the history of Scotland. The elder branch called the "Black Douglases" was extinct at this time, and the name was perpetuated in the younger branch, to whom the distinctive title of "Red Douglases" was applied. It was an ancient, powerful family, which contended for the crown with the first of the Stuarts, when Robert Bruce's posterity disappeared, and from that time had kept its place close to the throne, sometimes friendly, sometimes hostile, keeping a jealously watchful eye upon every great family, for all grandeur not dependent upon its own was offensive to it, especially that of the Hamiltons, who stood next to the Douglases in power, if indeed they were not on a level with them.

During the reign of James V., that King's hatred for them had not only caused the loss of all their influence, but had driven them into exile in England. This hatred was due to their having forcibly taken possession of the young prince and kept him in confinement until

he was fifteen years old. Then he succeeded in making his escape from Falkland, with the assistance of one of his pages, and got as far as Stirling, whose governor was devoted to him. As soon as he was safe within the castle he caused proclamation to be made that every Douglas found within twelve miles would be proceeded against on a charge of high treason. More than that: he procured a decree from Parliament declaring that they had forfeited their rights as citizens, and banishing them from the kingdom: their proscription lasted as long as the king lived, and they did not return to Scotland until after his death. The result was that, although they then resumed their old position near the throne, and occupied the most important offices, through the influence of Murray, who, it will be remembered, was a Douglas on his mother's side, they never forgave the daughter for the father's hatred.

Thus it was that James Douglas, though he was Chancellor of the realm, and in that capacity bound to see that the laws were executed, took the lead in a conspiracy, the object of which was a violation of every law, divine and human.

Douglas's first idea was to treat Rizzio as the favorites of James III. had been treated at the Bridge of Lauder, to go through the form of a trial, that is, and then hang him. But such a death would not satisfy Darnley's desire for vengeance: as the Queen was the one whom he really wanted to punish in the person of Rizzio, he demanded that the murder should be done in her presence.

Douglas took Lord Ruthven into the plot, a lazy, debauched sybarite, who promised to carry his co-operation so far as to don a cuirass: having made sure of one powerful accomplice, he set about finding others to assist him.

The conspiracy, however, was not hatched so secretly that something of it did not transpire, and Rizzio received several warnings which he disdained to notice. Sir James Melville, among others, tried in every possible way, to impress upon him the dangerous position which a stranger enjoying the sovereign's entire confidence occupied at a court so barbarous and jealous as that of Scotland. Rizzio received these hints as if he were determined not to apply them to himself, and Melville, feeling that he had done all that his conscience called upon him to do, forbore to insist further.

Then came a French priest who was considered a very skillful astrologer: he made his way to Rizzio's presence, and warned him that the stars said that he was in peril of his life, and that he must be especially distrustful of a certain bastard. Rizzio replied that he had sacrificed his life to the duties of his position, in anticipation, the day that he was first honored with the confidence of his sovereign, but that since then he had taken notice that the Scotch were, in general, very quick to threaten, but slow to act. As to the bastard of whom he spoke, who undoubtedly was the Earl of Murray, he knew better than to come far enough into Scotland for his sword to reach him, though it were long enough to reach from Dumfries to Edinburgh: which was another way of saying that Murray would pass the rest of his life in England in exile, for Dumfries was a frontier town. Meanwhile the plot pursued the even tenor of its way, and Douglas and Ruthven, having selected their accomplices and made their preparations, sought out Darnley to close the bargain. As the price of the bloody service they had undertaken to do for the king-consort they demanded his promise to obtain the pardon of Murray and the other noblemen who were

compromised with him in the "*Run about Raid.*" Darnley promised whatever they wished, and a courier was sent to Murray to advise him of the plot which was in preparation, and to suggest that he hold himself in readiness to return to Scotland as soon as he should hear of its consummation. This point settled, they made Darnley sign a statement to the effect that he was the promoter and leader of the undertaking.

The other assassins were the Earl of Morton, the Earl of Ruthven, George Douglas, the bastard of Angus, Lindsay and Andrew Carew. The rest were soldiers, veritable murdering machines, who did not even know what they were wanted for. Darnley reserved the right to fix the time.

Two days after that on which the arrangements were completed, Darnley having been notified that the Queen was alone with Rizzio, undertook to satisfy himself as to the degree of favor with which the minister was honored by her. Consequently he tried to enter her apartment by a private door of which he always had the key upon him: but he turned the key in the lock to no purpose, the door would not open. Then Darnley knocked, giving his name: but his wife had come to hold him in such utter contempt that she left him standing outside, although, even if she had been alone with Rizzio, she would have had ample time to send him away. Darnley, angered beyond endurance, by this last stroke, sent for Morton, Ruthven, Lennox, Lindsay and Douglas, and fixed the day after the morrow for the murder.

They had arranged all the details, and allotted the parts which each was to play in the bloody drama, when suddenly, and just when they least expected it, the door opened, and Mary Stuart appeared upon the threshold.

"My Lords," she said, "it is useless for you to hold

these secret meetings. I am fully informed as to your plot, and with God's help I will soon apply a remedy."

Thereupon, and before the conspirators had time to recover from their surprise, she closed the door and disappeared, a fleeting, but ominous vision. They were all struck dumb. Morton was the first to find his tongue.

"My Lords," he said, "we are playing a game of life and death, and the prize is not for the cleverest or the strongest, but the most prompt. If we do not make an end of this man, we are lost ourselves. Therefore we must not wait until the day after to-morrow, but must strike him down this evening."

All applauded this suggestion, even Ruthven, who promised not to be behindhand, although he was still pale and feverish from a drunken debauch. The only change made in Morton's proposition was to postpone the murder till the next day; for they were all agreed that at least a day was needed to get together the subordinate conspirators, of whom there were some hundred and fifty.

The next day was the ninth of March, 1566. Mary, who had inherited the hatred of etiquette and love of freedom, which distinguished her father, James V., had invited six people, including Rizzio, to supper. Darnley was informed of this circumstance in the morning, and immediately notified the conspirators that he would himself let them into the palace between six and seven in the evening. They replied that they would be ready.

The morning was dark and stormy, as almost all the early days of spring are in Scotland, and towards evening the storm of snow and wind raged with greatly increased violence. Mary was with Rizzio most of the day, and Darnley, who stole several times to the private door, could hear the sound of musical instruments, and the voice of the favorite singing those sweet melodies which

have come down to our day, and which the people of Edinburgh still ascribe to him. They were to Mary a reminder of her life in France, which the artists, who had come thither in the suite of the Medicis, had made an echo of Italy; but to Darnley they were an insult, and every time he went away from the door, his determination was strengthened.

At the appointed hour, the conspirators, who had received the countersign during the day, knocked at the castle gate, and were received by Darnley himself, who was awaiting them at the postern wrapped in a great cloak. The hundred and fifty soldiers glided at once into an inner courtyard, where they took refuge under the gun-sheds to protect themselves from the cold as well as to avoid being seen against the snow which covered the ground. A brilliantly lighted window looked upon this courtyard; it was in the Queen's cabinet, and the soldiers were to burst in the door and rush to the assistance of the chief conspirators at a signal to be given from that window.

Having given these instructions, Darnley led Morton, Ruthven, Lennox, Lindsay, Andrew Carew, and the bastard of Douglas, to the room adjoining the cabinet, separated from it only by a tapestry curtain, which hung before the door. There they could hear everything that was said, and land in the middle of the guests with a single leap.

Darnley left them there with the strictest instructions to maintain perfect silence, and to enter the cabinet when they heard him cry: "Douglas!" He then went around by way of the private corridor, so that the Queen's suspicions might not be aroused by his unforeseen visit when she saw him come in by the door he generally used.

Mary was at supper with her six guests, having Rizzio

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at her right hand, according to De Thou and Melville, while Camden, on the other hand, asserts that he was standing at a buffet, eating. The conversation was lively and unconstrained, for everyone was thoroughly enjoying that sense of well-being which one feels to be warm and well-housed, sitting at a sumptuous table, when the snow is pelting against the windows, and the wind groaning in the chimney. Suddenly Mary noticed that profound silence had succeeded the cheerful and animated conversation in which the guests had been engaged since they took their places at the table. From the direction which their eyes took she suspected that the cause of their embarrassment was behind her; she turned and saw Darnley leaning on the back of her chair. The Queen shuddered; for although her husband had a smile upon his lips, there was something so sinister in his expression as he looked at Rizzio, that it was evident that something terrible was about to happen. At the same moment Mary heard a heavy, dragging step approaching the cabinet, the portiére was lifted and Ruthven, pale as a ghost, and encased in armor, the weight of which he could hardly sustain, appeared in the doorway, and drawing his sword, stood silently leaning upon it. The Queen thought he was suffering from delirium tremens.

"What do you want, my Lord," she said, "and why do you come to the palace thus armed?"

"Ask the King, Madame," Ruthven replied gruffly. "It is for him to tell you."

"Explain yourself, my Lord," Mary demanded, turning to Darnley; "what is the meaning of such disregard of the proprieties?"

"It means, Madame," said Darnley, "that that man (pointing to Rizzio) "must leave this place at once."

"That man is in my service, my Lord," said Mary, rising with a haughty gesture, "and therefore he receives no orders from any but myself."

"Douglas!" cried Darnley.

With that the conspirators, who had been drawing nearer to Ruthven for some moments, fearing, from the well-known fickleness of Darnley's character, that he might not dare to pronounce the signal, and so would have brought them there to no purpose, burst into the room so precipitately that they upset the table. Thereupon, David Rizzio, seeing that he was the cause of this irruption, threw himself on his knees behind the Queen, seizing the hem of her dress, and crying in Italian: "*Guistizia! Guistizia!*"

The Queen, true to her character, did not show any fear at this ominous invasion of her apartments, but stood before Rizzio, and sheltered him behind the mantle of her majesty. But she relied too much upon the respect of these nobles, whose fathers had been fighting against their kings for five centuries. Andrew Carew held a dagger to her breast, and threatened to kill her if she persisted in defending him when they had resolved that he must die. Then Darnley, without regard for the Queen's pregnant condition, took her round the waist, and dragged her away from Rizzio, who remained on his knees, pale and trembling, while the bastard of Douglas, fulfilling the prediction of the astrologer, took Darnley's own dagger and buried it in the favorite's breast, inflicting a grievous, but not a mortal wound. Morton at once took him by the feet and dragged him out of the room, leaving on the floor the long blood-stain which is pointed out to-day. Then they all fell upon him like dogs upon their prey, and when they were weary of stabbing him, the body was pierced by fifty-six

dagger thrusts! Meanwhile Darnley was holding the Queen, who did not cease to cry for mercy, thinking that Rizzio was still alive. But Ruthven appeared again, paler than before, and nodded affirmatively in response to Darnley's inquiry if he was dead. Thereupon he sat down, being unable to bear any more fatigue in his weakened state, while the Queen, whom Darnley had at last released, was still standing.

This was too much for Mary.

"My Lord," she cried, "who gave you leave to sit in my presence? What means such insolence?"

"Madame," Ruthven replied, "it is not insolence, but weakness, which causes me to act thus; for I have taken more exercise than the doctors allow in order to do your husband a service."

Then he turned to a servant.

"Bring me a glass of wine," he said.

"Here is proof that I have earned it," he continued, showing his bloody dagger to Darnley.

The valet obeyed, and Ruthven emptied his glass as tranquilly as if he had just performed the most innocent action in the world.

"My Lord," said the Queen, taking a step toward him, "it may be that, being a woman, I shall never find an opportunity to be revenged for this that you have done, notwithstanding my longing and determination; but," she added, striking her breast energetically, "the son whom I am carrying here, for whose life you should have had more respect, even though you respect my person so little, will avenge me some day for all these insults."

With a superb threatening gesture, she left the room by Darnley's door, which she closed behind her.

The next moment there was a great noise on the other

side of the portière. Huntly, Athol, and Bothwell, the latter of whom is to play a prominent part in the sequel, were supping together in another part of the palace, when they heard shouting and the clash of weapons. They rushed with all haste in the direction of the sound, and Athol, who went first, stumbled over the body of Rizzio, which lay at the top of the stairway. They had no idea who it was, but supposed, when they saw that a man had been murdered, that there was some plot against the King and Queen, and drew their swords to force the door, which was guarded by Morton. But as soon as Darnley saw how the land lay, he hurried from the cabinet, followed by Ruthven, and showed himself to the newcomers.

"My Lords," he said, "the Queen's person and my own are in no danger, and nothing has been done here except by our orders. Be good enough to withdraw; you will be fully informed when the time comes."

He raised Rizzio's head by the hair, while the bastard of Douglas held a torch to the face so that it might be recognized.

"You see who this is," said Darnley, "is it worth your while to make trouble for yourselves on his account?"

As soon as Huntly, Athol and Bothwell recognized the musician-minister, they sheathed their swords, saluted the King, and retired.

Mary left the room with no thought in her heart save vengeance. But she realized that she could not wreak vengeance on her husband and his accomplices all at one time; so she called into play all the fascination of her wit and beauty to draw the King away from the others. It was no difficult task, for when the brutal passion, which often carried Darnley beyond all bounds, had time to cool down, he was himself terrified at the foul deed

that had been done; and while the assassins, in consultation with Murray, were deciding that he should have the crown matrimonial he was so ambitious to wear, Darnley himself, as fickle as he was violent, as cowardly as cruel, was negotiating another treaty in Mary's very apartment and in sight of the blood which was hardly dry; by that treaty he agreed to betray his accomplices.

Three days after the scene we have described, the murderers were amazed to learn that Darnley and Mary, accompanied by Lord Seyton, had fled from Holyrood Palace. In three days more a proclamation appeared, signed by Mary at Dunbar Castle, summoning, in her own name and in her husband's, all the nobles of Scotland, high and low, to join her, including those who were compromised in the *Run and Raid*, to whom she not only granted full pardon, but gave her confidences once more. In this way she separated Murray's cause from that of Morton and the other assassins; and these latter, seeing that there was no more safety for them in Scotland, took refuge in England, where any enemy of the Queen, notwithstanding the cordial relations apparently subsisting between Mary and Elizabeth, could always be sure of a warm welcome. Bothwell, whose impulse had been to prevent the murder, was appointed Lord Keeper of the kingdom.

Unfortunately for her own honor, Mary, who was always more woman than queen, while Elizabeth, on the other hand, was always more queen than woman, no sooner felt herself firm on her throne once more, than she caused Rizzio's body, which had been buried without ceremony at the gate of the church nearest to Holyrood, to be exhumed, and deposited in the sarcophagus of the kings of Scotland, thus compromising

herself even more by the honors rendered the dead than by the favors accorded the living.

This ill-advised demonstration naturally led to renewed dissension between Mary and Darnley; and their quarrels were the more bitter because, as we have seen, the reconciliation, on Mary's side at least, was only feigned. She felt that her approaching maternity added much to her strength, so she threw aside all pretence, left Darnley at Dunbar, and went thence to Edinburgh Castle, where she was brought to bed on the nineteenth of June, 1566, three months after the murder of Rizzio, of a son, who afterwards became James VI.

Immediately after her delivery, Mary sent for Sir James Melville, her usual envoy to Elizabeth, and instructed him to carry the news to her, and at the same time beg her to be the child's god-mother. When he reached London, Melville went at once to the palace, but a ball was in progress so that he could not see the Queen; he therefore informed Cecil, her minister, of the purpose of his mission, and asked him to request his mistress to give him audience on the morrow.

Elizabeth was going through the figures of a quadrille when Cecil approached her and said in a low tone:

"Queen Mary, of Scotland, has given birth to a son."

At these words she turned deathly pale, and gazed wildly around as if she were on the point of fainting; she supported herself at first against a chair, but soon her legs failed her, and she sat down, throwing her head back, and absorbed in painful reflections.

One of the ladies of the court elbowed her way through the circle which was formed around the Queen, and asked her anxiously what she was thinking about that made her so sad.

"Why, Madame," said Elizabeth peevishly, "do you not know how the Queen of Scots hath a fine son, and I am but a barren stock, and shall die and leave no offspring?"

But Elizabeth was too shrewd a politician, notwithstanding her proneness to yield to first impulses, to compromise herself by making any further demonstration of her chagrin. The ball went on as before, and the interrupted quadrille was resumed and finished.

The following day Melville had his audience. Elizabeth received him with the greatest cordiality, assuring him of the great pleasure she derived from the news he brought, which had cured her, she said, of an indisposition she had suffered from for a fortnight past. Melville replied that his mistress had lost no time in causing her to be informed of her own happiness, knowing that she had no better friend; but he added that her happiness had nearly cost her her life, as she had suffered terribly. He kept recurring to this point, in order to increase the aversion of the Queen of England for the married state.

"You need have no fear, Melville," Elizabeth replied at last: "you need not emphasize that so much, for I shall never marry. My kingdom takes the place of a husband, and my subjects are my children. When I die I wish these words to be carved on my tomb:

"Here lies Elizabeth, who reigned so many years, and died a virgin."

Melville took advantage of the opportunity to remind the Queen of the desire she had expressed three or four years before, to see Mary: but she said that not only did the affairs of her realm require her constant presence, but she was not anxious, after all she had heard of the beauty of her rival, to expose herself to a comparison fraught with danger to her pride. So she gave her

proxy to the Duke of Bedford, who went north with several other noblemen to Stirling Castle, where the young prince was baptized with great pomp, and received the name of Charles James.

It was observed that Darnley did not appear at the ceremony, and his absence seemed to scandalize Queen Elizabeth's representative. On the other hand, James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell, was very much in evidence there.

It was the fact that Bothwell, since the evening when he heard Mary's shrieks, and ran to prevent the murder of Rizzio, had made great strides in the Queen's favor; and he had openly espoused her party as opposed to those of the King and the Earl of Murray.

Bothwell was a man of thirty-five, the head of the powerful Hepburn family, who wielded great influence in the Eastern Lotheans, and the County of Berwick. He was of violent and brutal temper, a slave to every vice, and capable of any villainy to gratify the ambition which he did not take the trouble to conceal. In his youth he was considered brave, but he had had no serious occasion to draw his sword for a long time.

If the King's authority had been shaken by Rizzio's influence, it was altogether overthrown by Bothwell's. The great nobles, following the example of the favorite, no longer stood in Darnley's presence, and gradually ceased to treat him even as their equal: his suite was cut down, his silver plate was taken away, and the few officers who remained with him made him purchase their services with bitter mortification. The Queen, for her part, no longer took the slightest pains to conceal her aversion for him, and openly avoided him. She carried her avoidance of him to such a point that one day when she had gone with Bothwell to Alway, she started back

again immediately when Darnley joined them there. He kept his patience, however, until a fresh imprudence brought about the terrible catastrophe which had been foreseen by many from the very beginning of her intimacy with Bothwell.

In the last days of October, 1566, the Queen was holding a court of justice at Jedburgh, when word was brought that Bothwell had been severely wounded in the hand, while trying to lay hold of a malefactor named John Elliot of the Park. She was just about to go to the council, but she immediately postponed the sitting till the morrow, and started on horseback for the Hermitage where Bothwell was lying. She made the whole journey without dismounting, although the distance was twenty miles, and the road lay through forests and swamps and across rivers; and after spending some hours tête-a-tête with him she rode back to Jedburgh with equal haste, arriving there during the night.

Although this performance made a great noise, exaggerated as it was by the enemies of the Queen who were particularly numerous in the Reformed religion, Darnley did not hear of it for nearly two months, when Bothwell was completely cured, and had returned with the Queen to Edinburgh.

Darnley made up his mind then that he ought not to endure such humiliation any longer. But, since his betrayal of his accomplices, there was not a nobleman in all Scotland, who would deign to draw sword for him, so he resolved to go to the Earl of Lennox, his father, hoping that his influence would avail to rally the malcontents, who were very numerous since Bothwell's rise in favor. Unfortunately Darnley, indiscreet and rash, as always, confided his plan to some of his officers, who informed Bothwell of their master's purpose.

Bothwell made no open objection to his journey: but Darnley was not a mile out of Edinburgh when he began to feel violent pains: he kept on, however, and arrived at Glasgow very ill. He at once sent for a celebrated physician, one James Abrenets, who found his body covered with pustules, and declared unhesitatingly that he was poisoned. There are those, however, Sir Walter Scott, among them, who assert that his trouble was nothing more nor less than small-pox.

However that may be, the Queen, in the face of her husband's danger, seemed to forget her resentment; she sent her own physician on ahead, and went herself to join Darnley, heedless of the risk she ran. To be sure, if we are to put faith in certain letters, dated at Glasgow, and which Mary is accused of having written to Bothwell, she knew too well the nature of the disease to fear contagion. As these letters are little known, and seem to us to possess great interest, we will transcribe them here: later we shall take occasion to tell how they fell into the hands of the confederate noblemen, and how they passed from their hands to Elizabeth, who exclaimed joyfully when she received them:

"God's death! Now I hold her life and honor in my hands!"

First Letter.

"When I came away from the place where I left my heart, judge in what a condition I was—poor body without a soul! Throughout dinner I spoke to nobody, and nobody dared to come near me, for it was easy to see that it would not be good for them to do so. When I was within a league of the city, the Earl of Lennox sent one of his gentlemen to offer his respects to me, and

to apologize for his not coming himself: he sent word to me, further, that he did not dare to appear before me since the rebuke I administered to him at Cunninghan. The messenger besought me, as of his own motion, to examine his master's conduct to see if my suspicions were well founded. I replied that fear was an incurable disease, that the Earl of Lennox would not be so disturbed if his conscience did not reproach him, and that if I was rather quick with him, it was no more than a fair reprisal for the letter he wrote to me.

"Not one person who lives in the city has called upon me, which leads me to think that they are all in his interest: more than that, they speak of him as well as of his son, in the highest terms. The King sent for Joachim yesterday, and asked him why I did not take up my quarters with him, adding that my presence would cure him at once: he also asked what my purpose was in coming: whether it was to be reconciled with him: whether you were here: whether I had prepared a list of the members of my household: whether I had taken Paris and Gilbert for secretaries: and whether I was still determined to dismiss Joseph. I don't know who has kept him so well posted. There is nothing, not even Sebastien's marriage, which he doesn't know all about.

"I asked him to explain one of his letters in which he complained of the cruelty of certain people. He replied that he was in despair, but that my presence caused him so much joy that he thought he would die of it. He reproached me several times because I seemed thoughtful: I left him to go to supper; he begged me to return and I did so. He then told me the history of his illness, and said that his only wish was to make a will leaving everything to me, adding that I was in a measure the cause of his trouble which he attributed to my coldness.

"'You ask me,' he said, 'who these people are of whom I complain: it is of you, cruel one, of you, whom I have not been able to appease by my tears and my repentance. I know that I insulted you, but not in the matter which you charged me with: I have also insulted some of your subjects, but you forgave me that. I am young, and you say that I continually fall back into the same faults: but is there not hope that a young man like myself, entirely without experience, will give the lie to appearances, repent, and correct his errors with time? If you will pardon me but once more, I will promise never to offend you again. The only favor which I ask is that we live together once more as husband and wife, have but one table and one bed: if you are inflexible, I will never rise again. Tell me, I implore you, what you decide to do: God alone knows how I suffer, and all because I think of nothing but you, because I love you and worship you, and you alone. If I have sometimes offended you, you should blame yourself for it: for when any one offends me, if I were able to complain to you, I should never confide my annoyance to others: but when we are at odds with each other, I am compelled to lock my sorrow in my own bosom, and it drives me mad.'

"He urged me to remain with him, and to occupy an apartment in his house: but I excused myself. I told him that he needed to be purged, and that it could not be done conveniently at Glasgow. Then he said that he knew that I had ordered a litter for him, but that he would much prefer to make the journey with me. I believe that he thought I intended to imprison him, but I replied that I would have him taken to Craigmillar, where he would find physicians to attend him; that I would stay with him, and we should be where we could see my son. He replied that he would go wherever I chose to take

him, provided that I would grant what he asked. He does not wish that anybody should see him.

"He said hundreds of pretty things to me, which I cannot remember, but which would surprise even you. He would not let me go, but insisted upon my sitting up with him. For my own part, I pretended to believe all he said, and appeared deeply interested in him. Indeed I never saw him so insignificant or so humble: and if I had not known how easily his heart overflows, and if mine were not impenetrable to every sort of weapon except those with which you have wounded it, I believe I should have allowed myself to be touched: but pray do not be alarmed, for I would die rather than prove false to what I have promised you. I entreat you to be governed by a similar feeling in your dealings with the the perfidious wretches who will do their utmost to estrange you from me. I believe that all these people were cast in the same mould: this one has tears in his eyes: he humbles himself before everybody, from the highest to the lowest, hoping to interest them in his behalf, and to make them pity him. His father was taken with bleeding at the nose and mouth to-day: you can guess the meaning of these symptoms: I have not yet seen him for he is confined to the house. The King insists that I shall feed him, or he will not eat at all: but whatever I do, you will not be taken in by it any more than I am myself. We are bound, you and I, to two people of a very detestable sort: let us pray that hell will break these bonds, and that heaven will forge softer ones for us, which nothing can break, and make of us the most faithful and loving couple that ever breathed! There is my profession of the faith, in which I wish to die.

"Excuse my scrawling: you will be compelled to

guess at more than half of it, but I know no remedy, I am forced to write very hurriedly while everybody is asleep: but never fear, I take untold pleasure in my vigil: for I cannot sleep as the others do, since I am unable to sleep as I would like, in your arms.

"I am going to bed now: to-morrow I will finish my letter: I have too many things to write you, and the night is too far advanced. Imagine my suffering: I am writing to you: I am talking to you of myself, and yet I must stop.

"I cannot refrain however from filling hastily the bit of paper that I have left. Curses on the madman who torments me so! but for him I might be talking to you of more agreeable things. He is not much changed: *and yet he took a great deal of it.* But his fetid breath almost overpowered me: for it is much worse than your cousin's: you can imagine that that is an additional reason for my not going near him: on the contrary, I get as far away as I possibly can, and sit on a chair at the foot of his bed.

"Let me see if I have forgotten anything:

"His father's messenger on the road:

"His examination of Joachim:

"The last of my household:

"The people who are with me:

"The purpose of my coming:

"Joseph:

"The interview between him and myself:

"His desire to be agreeable to me and his repentance:

"Explanation of his letter.

"Livingston:

"Ah! I forgot that. Yesterday Livingston said to me in an undertone at the supper table at Madame de Rère's that he drank to the health of I knew whom, and

begged me to join him in the toast. After supper, as I was leaning on his shoulder near the fire, he said to me:

"'Isn't it true that these visits are very agreeable to those who pay and those who receive them? But, no matter how delighted they may seem to be at your coming, I defy their delight to equal the sorrow of him whom you have left alone to-day, and who will never know content until he sees you again.'

"I asked him whom he referred to. He replied, pressing my arm:

"'To one of those who did not come with you: it's an easy matter for you to guess whom I mean, among them.'

"I worked on the bracelet until two o'clock: I have enclosed a little key, attached by two ribbons. It isn't as well done as I could have wished: but I had not the time to do it better: I will make you a better one at the first opportunity. Be careful that no one sees it in your possession, for I have worked on it before everybody, and it will surely be recognized.

"I constantly recur, in spite of myself, to the horrible deed you urge upon me. You force me to dissimulation and treachery which make me shudder. I should rather die, believe me, than commit such a crime, for the thought makes my heart bleed. He will not go with me unless I promise to sit at the same table and occupy the same bed with him, as before, and not to leave him so frequently. If I consent, he will do, he says, whatever I wish, and will go with me to the ends of the world: but he has entreated me to postpone my departure two days. I have pretended to consent to whatever he wishes: but I told him to say nothing to anybody of our reconciliation for fear that some lords would take umbrage. In short, I can do with him as I please.

"Alas! I have never deceived anybody; but what would I not do to please you? Command, and come what may I will obey. But do you see if you cannot devise some secret means of doing it, in the guise of a remedy. He is to be purged at Craigmillar, and to take the baths there: for some days he will not go out. So far as I am able to judge, he is very suspicious: he has great confidence in what I say, but not enough to unbosom himself to me. If you wish I will tell him everything: I cannot take pleasure in deceiving anyone who trusts me. However, it shall be just as you say: do not esteem me any the less for it, for it was you who advised me to do it: my desire for vengeance would never have carried me so far. Sometimes he attacks me on a very sensitive spot, and touches me to the quick, when he tells me that his crimes are well-known to him, but that greater ones are committed every day, and that it is useless to try to conceal them, because all crimes, great and small, always come to men's knowledge, and are common subjects of conversation.

"He sometimes says, speaking of Madame de Rère: 'I trust that her accommodations are satisfactory.'

"He assures me that many people thought, and that he himself thought, that I was not my own mistress: that is because I rejected the conditions he offered me, I doubt not. It is certain that he is very uneasy on the subject you know of, and that he suspects that there are designs upon his life. He is in despair whenever the conversation touches upon you or Lethington or my brother. It is true, nevertheless, that he says neither good nor ill of the absent, but always shuns speaking of them at all. His father is confined to his house: I have not seen him yet.

"The Hamiltons are here in great numbers, and

accompany me everywhere; all the friends of 'the other' follow me whenever I go to see him. He begged me to be present to-morrow when he gets up. My courier will tell you the rest.

"Burn my letter; it would be dangerous to keep it. Nor, indeed, would it be worth while, as it is filled with black thoughts.

"Do not you be offended, I am sad and anxious to-day, when I throw honor, remorse and danger to the winds to please you. Do not take what I say in bad part, I pray you, and do not listen to the malevolent suggestions of your wife's brother; he is a villain to whom you ought not to lend your ear to the prejudice of the most affectionate and faithful mistress who ever lived. Above all do not allow yourself to be moved by that woman; her crocodile tears are of no importance in comparison with the real tears I shed, and with the suffering which my love and my constancy lead me to endure, in order that I may succeed her. It is for that alone that I betray, in spite of myself, all those who may throw obstacles in the way of my love. May God be merciful to me, and send you all the prosperity which your humble and loving friend wishes you—your friend, who hopes soon to receive a different recompense at your hands. It is very late; but I always lay aside my pen regretfully when I am writing to you; however I will not finish my letter until I have kissed your hands.

"Pardon the execrable writing; perhaps I wrote it so badly purposely, so that you might be obliged to read it several times. I have transcribed hastily what I had jotted down on my tablets, and my paper failed me. Remember a loving friend, and write often to her; love me as dearly as I love you, and remember

"Madame de Rère's words:

"The Englishmen:
"The Duke of Argyle:
"The Earl of Bothwell:
"The house at Edinburgh."

SECOND LETTER.

"It would seem that you have forgotten me during our separation, especially as you told me when you went away that you would write me full details of everything new that happened. The hope of hearing from you gave me almost as much pleasure as your return would have done; you have postponed it longer than you promised. For myself, I continue to play my part although you do not write me. I shall take him to Craigmillar on Monday, and he will stay there through Wednesday. I shall go to Edinburgh that day to be bled, unless you order me to do otherwise. He is in higher spirits than usual, and is better than ever. He tells me everything he can think of to persuade me that he loves me; he is attentive to me beyond measure, and anticipates my every want. All this is so agreeable to me that I never enter his room that the pain in my side doesn't attack me, his company is so burdensome to me. If Paris brings me what I asked him for I shall soon be cured. If you have not returned when I go to the place you know of, write me, I implore you, and tell me what you want me to do; for if you do not manage the affair prudently, I warn you that the whole burden will fall upon me. Consider it in every light and mature your plans with care. I send you my letter by Beaton, who will leave here on the day on which Balfour was to leave. It only remains for me to beg you to keep me informed of your movements."

Glasgow, Saturday morning.

THIRD LETTER.

"I stopped at the place you know of longer than I should have done, if it had not been that I desired to draw from him something which the bearer of these presents will tell you; it affords us an excellent opportunity to cloak our designs. I have promised to bring him to-morrow the person you know of. Look after what remains to be done if you are favorably impressed with it.

"Alas! I have violated our agreement, for you forbade my writing or sending a courier to you. But really I have no purpose to offend you; if you knew the fears which disturb my soul, you would not be so bitter and suspicious yourself. But I take it in good part, for I am sure that it is nothing but love which makes you so—love which is dearer to me than all else under heaven.

"My own feelings are a sure guaranty of that love, and answer to me for your heart; upon that point my confidence is without reserve; but explain yourself fully, in pity's name, and open your heart to me. Otherwise I shall fear that my unhappy destiny and the too auspicious influence of the stars upon the destiny of women less affectionate and faithful than I, have caused me to be supplanted in your heart, as Medea was in that of Jason; not that I wish to compare you to a lover so hapless as Jason was, or to put myself on a level with a monster like Medea, although your influence over me is powerful enough to make me do as she did whenever our love demands it, and whenever I am driven to it to retain your heart, which belongs to me and to me alone; for I consider that my own which I have purchased with the devoted and faithful love for you which is consuming me—a love which is more ardent to-day than ever before

and which will end only with my life,—a love, in short, which makes me scorn the perils and remorse which are like to be its sad results. As the price of this sacrifice, I ask but one favor, and that is that you will remember a place which is not far from here: I do not demand that you keep your promise to-morrow, but I do desire to see you that I may make an end of your suspicions. I ask but one thing of God: that He will enable you to read my heart, which is less mine than yours, and that He will preserve you from all ill, at least during my life; life is dear to me only so far as it gives you pleasure to have me live. I am just going to bed; adieu; let me hear from you to-morrow morning, for I shall be anxious until I do. Like the bird escaped from its cage, or the turtle-dove who has lost her mate, I shall bewail your absence in solitude, however brief it may be. This letter, more fortunate than I, will go where I cannot go, if the messenger does not find you asleep, which I fear. I did not dare to write in the presence of Joseph, Sebastien and Joachim, and they did not leave me until just before I began."

As may be seen by these letters, assuming them to be genuine, Mary was the victim of one of those insensate passions for Bothwell, which are always the stronger in proportion to the difficulty of accounting for them. Bothwell was no longer young, he was not handsome, and yet Mary sacrificed for his sake a young husband, who was considered to be one of the handsomest men of his time. It seemed like witchcraft.

Thus we see that Darnley, as he was the only obstacle to the union of the lovers, had been condemned long since, by Bothwell at all events, if not by Mary; but his vigorous constitution had proved too much for the

poison, so they sought other means to put him to death. The Queen, as she told Bothwell in her letter, refused to take Darnley with her, and returned alone to Edinburgh. From that city she gave orders that the King should be taken, not to Stirling or to Holyrood, but to the Abbey of Kirk-of-Field. He made some remonstrance when he was informed of this decision, but as he had no power to oppose it, he contented himself with complaints of the loneliness of the abode assigned to him; but the Queen made answer that she could not receive him at the moment, either at Stirling or at Holyrood, for fear that her son would take the disease if it were contagious; so he had no choice but to resign himself to stay where he was.

The abbey stood entirely by itself and its location was not at all calculated to dissipate the fears which invaded the King's mind. It was surrounded by two ruined churches and two cemeteries, and the nearest house was almost a gun-shot away; and as that house belonged to the Hamiltons, who were Darnley's mortal enemies, its proximity was far from reassuring. Farther away, to the north, was a cluster of miserable huts, called the "Thieves' Crossroads." On making the circuit of his new domicile Darnley noticed that two holes had been made in the wall, each large enough for a man to pass through; he requested that they be stopped up, because they might be used by evil disposed persons to effect an entrance; they promised to send a mason to do as he wished, but nothing was done about it, and the holes remained open and unobstructed.

The day after his arrival at Kirk-of-Field, the King noticed a light in the nearest house, which he supposed to be uninhabited. He made inquiries of Alexander Durham as to the meaning of it, and was told that the

Archbishop of St. Andrews had left his palace at Edinburgh for some unknown reason, and had taken up his abode there the day before. This intelligence served only to increase his anxiety, for the Archbishop of St. Andrews was one of his most outspoken foes.

Darnley, abandoned by all his servants, one after another, occupied the first floor of a little isolated pavilion, with no attendant save Alexander Durham, his valet, whom we have already mentioned. Darnley was particularly attached to him, and, moreover, he was in momentary apprehension of some attempt upon his life; so he ordered him to bring his bed to his room, which was thenceforth occupied by both.

During the night of February 8th, Darnley aroused Durham, and told him that he thought he had heard steps in the room beneath his. Durham rose, took his sword in one hand and a candle in the other, and went down to the ground floor; but, although Darnley was very certain that he could not be mistaken, he came up again a moment after and said that he could see nobody.

The following morning passed without incident.

The Queen had arranged a marriage for one of her servants, Sebastien, an Auvergnat, whom she had brought with her from France, and to whom she was much attached. The wedding was set for that day, but the King sent to Mary to remind her that he had not seen her for two days, so she left the scene of the festivities about six o'clock in the evening, and went to pay him a visit, accompanied by the Countess of Argyle and the Countess of Huntly. While she was there, Durham, in preparing his bed, set fire to the straw mattress, which was destroyed, as was a part of the hair mattress. He threw them all out of the window still burning, for

fear that some of the other furniture would take fire, and thus was left without a bed to lie on. He asked permission to go into the city to sleep, but Darnley, who had not forgotten the alarm of the preceding night, and was somewhat astonished at the haste with which Durham had thrown all his bedding out of the window, begged him not to go away, and offered to let him have one of his mattresses, or to give him a share of his own bed. But Durham insisted, saying that he felt ill, and would be very glad of the opportunity to see a doctor during the evening. Thereupon the Queen interceded for him and promised Darnley that she would send another servant to pass the night with him: he had no choice, therefore, but to yield, and he gave Durham leave of absence for the night, after making Mary repeat her promise to send some one to replace him.

At this moment, Paris, of whom the Queen speaks in her letters, entered the room; he was a young Frenchman, who had been some years in Scotland in the service of Bothwell and Seaton, and was now in the Queen's service. She rose when she saw him, and said to Darnley, who tried to detain her:

"Really, it's impossible, my Lord; I left poor Sebastien's wedding-feast to come and see you, and I must return, for I have agreed to wear a mask at the ball."

The King did not dare to urge her any further; he simply reminded her of her promise to send a servant to him, which promise Mary reiterated as she went out with her suite. Durham had taken his leave the moment he received permission.

It was nine o'clock; Darnley, left alone, secured his doors carefully on the inside and went to bed, ready to rise at any moment and open the door for the servant who was to pass the night with him. His head was

hardly on the pillow before he heard the same noise he had heard the night before. He listened with all the intentness of fear, and soon he was absolutely certain that several men were walking about in the room below. To call for help was useless, to leave the room perilous: to wait was the only course left for him to pursue. He made sure once more that the doors were securely fastened, put his sword under his pillow, extinguished his lamp for fear that its light would betray him, and waited in silence for the servant to arrive: but the hours rolled by and the servant did not appear.

At one o'clock in the morning, after a long interview with the Queen in the presence of the captain of the guards, Bothwell returned to his quarters and changed his dress. In a few moments he came out again wrapped in the long cloak of a German hussar, walked through the guard house, and caused the castle gates to be opened for him. Once outside, he made all haste to Kirk-of-Field, and entered the grounds through the gap in the wall. He had taken but a few steps in the garden when he met James Balfour, governor of the castle of Edinburgh.

"Well," he said, "how go the preparations?"

"Everything is ready," Balfour replied, "and we were only awaiting your arrival to light the match."

"Good!" rejoined Bothwell, "but first I must be sure that he is in his room."

He opened the door of the pavilion with a false key, then crept up the stairs on tiptoe and listened at Darnley's door. Darnley, hearing no more noise, had at last dropped off to sleep, but his irregular breathing showed how troubled his sleep was. It mattered little to Bothwell, however, whether his sleep was troubled or untroubled, so long as he was really in his room. He crept

down the stairs as softly as he had gone up, and taking a lantern from one of the conspirators, went into the lower room to see for himself if everything was prepared. This room was full of casks of powder, and a fuse was all laid, needing only the spark to communicate its flame to the volcano. Bothwell thereupon retired to the end of the garden, with Balfour, David, Chambers, and three or four others, leaving one man to set fire to the fuse. An instant later this man joined them.

Some anxious moments ensued, during which the conspirators gazed at each other in silence, as if they were afraid of the sound of their own voices. At last, as the explosion did not materialize, Bothwell turned impatiently to the man who was to have lighted the fuse, and reproached him for having failed to do it, doubtless because he was afraid. He assured his master that everything was certainly all right, and when Bothwell, in his impatience, started to go back to the house and make sure, he offered to return, himself, and see what the trouble was. He did actually go all the way back to the pavilion, looked through a sort of air-hole, and saw that the fuse was still burning. He ran back at full speed to Bothwell and the others, and was just motioning to them that all was well when there was a terrible detonation, the pavilion seemed to rise bodily in the air, and the city and the bay were illuminated with a brilliancy surpassing that of the brightest noon-day. Then everything became blacker than before, and the silence was broken only by the falling of stones and timbers as thick as hailstones in a tempest.

The next day they found the King's body in a neighboring garden: it was protected from the action of the fire by the mattresses upon which he was lying: he had thrown himself upon his bed in dressing gown and

slippers, and was found in the same condition except that the slippers had fallen a few feet away from where his body lay, it was supposed by many people that he was strangled in the first place, and then carried there: but the most probable theory is that the murderers relied upon the powder alone: it was a sufficiently powerful auxiliary in itself for them to have no fear that it would fail of its effect.

Was the Queen privy to this crime, or was she not? Nobody has ever known save herself, Bothwell, and God. But whether she was, or was not, her conduct, imprudent then as always, gave the appearance of truth, at least, if not absolute certainty, to the accusations of her enemies. As soon as she was informed of the catastrophe, she ordered the body brought before her, and she examined it, as it lay upon a bench, with more curiosity than grief. It was afterwards embalmed, and that same evening was laid, without display, beside that of Rizzio.

Scottish etiquette made it obligatory upon the widow of a King of Scotland to pass the forty days next after his demise in retirement, in an apartment from which every particle of day-light was excluded. On the twelfth day Mary caused her windows to be thrown open, and on the fifteenth left Edinburgh with Bothwell for Leyton, a country-house two leagues from the capital. Ducroe, the French ambassador, sought her out there, and remonstrated with her to such effect that he induced her to return to Edinburgh: but, instead of the acclamations which usually greeted her coming she was welcomed with absolute freezing silence, except that one woman in the crowd cried:

"God treats her as she deserves!"

The names of the murderers were no secret to the people. Bothwell carried a magnificent coat, which was

too large for him, to a tailor, and ordered him to make it over to fit him: the tailor recognized it as having formerly belonged to the King:

"It's quite right," he said, "it is customary for the executioner to inherit the property of his victim."

Meanwhile the Earl of Lennox, supported by popular opinion, loudly demanded justice for his son's death, and came forward himself as accuser of his murderers. The Queen, therefore, was compelled, in order to appease the paternal excitement and the public indignation, to command the Earl of Argyle, lord provost of the kingdom, to investigate the occurrence. On the same day on which this order was given, a proclamation was posted on the streets of Edinburgh, offering in the Queen's name a reward of two thousand pounds sterling to any person who should give information concerning the murderers of the King. On the following day the following placard was found beside the other, wherever it was posted:

Whereas it has been publicly announced that those who should disclose the King's assassins should receive two thousand pounds sterling, I, who have made careful investigation, do declare that the authors of the crime are the Earl of Bothwell, James Balfour, David, Chambers, Blacmester, John Spens and the Queen herself.

This placard was speedily torn down, but as always happens in such cases, it had already been read by nine-tenths of the population.

The Earl of Lennox accused Bothwell, and public opinion seconded him with such energy, that Mary was constrained to allow him to be brought to trial: but all measures were taken to make it impossible for the accuser to secure his conviction. On the 28th of March the Earl of Lennox was advised that the trial was set

down for April 12th; thus only two short weeks were allowed him in which to collect his proofs against the most powerful man in Scotland. Lennox, therefore, judged that the trial would be nothing more than a mockery, and failed to appear. Bothwell, on the other hand, was accompanied to the place appointed for the trial by five thousand of his partisans, and two hundred chosen fusileers, who stood guard at the doors as soon as he had entered. As will be seen his attitude was more nearly that of a King preparing to disregard the laws, than of an accused person, prepared to submit to their execution. The anticipated result followed, and the jury acquitted Bothwell of the charge of which everybody, including his judges, knew him to be guilty.

On the day of the trial, Bothwell caused the challenge to be publicly posted.

"Although I am sufficiently exonerated from complicity in the murder of the King, of which I have been falsely accused, nevertheless, the better to maintain my innocence, I am ready to do battle against any person who dares assert that I killed the King."

This reply was not slow to make its appearance beside the other:

"I accept the challenge, provided that you select neutral ground."

Following immediately upon Bothwell's acquittal came reports that the Queen proposed to marry him. Strange and mad as such a marriage would seem to be, the relations between the two were so well known that no one doubted the truth of the report. But fear or ambition had brought every one under subjection to Bothwell, and only two men dared to lift their voices against the unholy union. They were Lord Herries and James Melville.

Mary was at Stirling when Lord Herries, profiting by Bothwell's temporary absence, threw himself at her feet and implored her not to cast honor to the winds by marrying her husband's murderer: for such a course would inevitably convince those who still doubted, that she was his accomplice. But the Queen, instead of expressing gratitude to Herries for his devotion, seemed much amazed at his audacity, and contemptuously motioned to him to rise, saying coldly that her heart had nothing to say to her in behalf of the Earl of Bothwell, and that if she ever married again, which was not probable, she would forget neither what she owed to her people, nor what she owed to herself.

Melville did not allow Herries' ill success to discourage him. He pretended to have received a letter from one of his friends in England, one Thomas Bishop, and showed the letter to the Queen. But Mary recognized the style of her ambassador, as well as his devoted friendship in the first line; she handed the letter to Maitland, of Lethington, who was present, and said:

"Here's a very strange letter. Pray read it. It's a little subterfuge of Melville's."

Lethington ran his eyes over the letter, but before he had read half of it, he seized Melville's hand, and led him to a window.

"My dear Melville," he said, "you were certainly mad just now when you handed this letter to the Queen, for as soon as Bothwell hears of it, and it won't be long, he will make an end of you. You have acted the part of an honorable man, it is true; but at court it is better to act the part of a clever politician. I strongly advise you to leave the court at the earliest possible moment."

Melville did not wait for him to repeat his advice, but kept out of sight for a week. Lethington's prophecy

was fulfilled; as soon as Bothwell returned to the Queen, he knew all that had taken place. He raved furiously against Melville, and sought for him high and low, but was unable to find him.

These symptoms of opposition, feeble as they were, caused Bothwell considerable uneasiness; and as he was sure of Mary's love he determined to hurry matters along. Consequently, as the Queen was returning from Stirling to Edinburgh, a few days after the scenes we have described, Bothwell suddenly appeared with a thousand horsemen, at the Bridge of Cramond. He ordered his men to disarm Huntly, Lethington and Melville, who had resumed his attendance upon his sovereign, and seized the Queen's rein. With a great show of violence he compelled Mary to retrace her steps and accompany him to Dunbar, which she did without the least resistance; a very extraordinary circumstance on the part of a person of Mary's character.

On the following day the Earls of Huntly and Lethington, Sir James Melville and their retainers were set at liberty; and ten days later, Bothwell and the Queen returned to Edinburgh together, apparently on the best possible terms.

On the second day after their return Bothwell gave a grand dinner party at a tavern to his adherents among the nobility. After the feast, on the very table at which they had eaten, and amid the half-emptied glasses and overturned bottles, Lindsay, Ruthven, Morton, Maitland, and some twelve or fifteen others signed a paper, in which they not only declared on their souls and consciences that Bothwell was innocent, but recommended him to the Queen as a fitting person for her to take to husband. This document closed with this extraordinary sentence:

"After all, the Queen cannot do otherwise, as the Earl has abducted her, and lain with her."

However, there were still two obstacles to the marriage: in the first place, Bothwell had already been married three times, and all three of his wives were living: in the second place, as he had abducted the Queen, that fact might be considered to annul any alliance which she might enter into with him. The first of these obstacles was first dealt with, as being the most difficult to overcome.

Bothwell's first two wives were of humble origin, and so they disdained to worry themselves about them. But it was not so with the third who was the daughter of that Earl of Huntly who was trampled under his horse's feet, and sister of Gordon, who was beheaded. Fortunately for Bothwell his past misconduct made his wife as eager for a divorce as he was himself, and it was an easy matter to induce her to bring forward charges of infidelity against her husband. Bothwell admitted that he had been criminally intimate with a relative of his wife, and the Archbishop of St. Andrews, the same who had taken up his quarters at the deserted mansion at Kirk-of-Field, in order to be on hand at Darnley's death, pronounced the decree of dissolution. The suit was entered, tried and decided within ten days.

As to the second obstacle, concerning the force put upon the Queen, Mary undertook to remove that herself. She went before the tribunal and declared that she not only forgave Bothwell for his conduct toward her, but that she proposed to heap fresh honors upon him as a loyal and trusty subject.

In pursuance of her declared purpose, she made him Duke of Orkney a few days later: and on the 15th of the same month, barely four months after Darnley's

demise with a levity that bordered on madness, Mary, who had solicited a dispensation to marry a Catholic prince, who was her cousin in the third degree, gave her hand to Bothwell, an upstart Protestant, who, notwithstanding his divorce, was still a bigamist, and now had four wives, including the Queen.

The wedding was a gloomy affair, as befitted a ceremony performed under such sanguinary auspices. Morton, Maitland and some fawning parasites of Bothwell were the only guests. The French ambassador, although he was a creature of the Guise family, to which Mary belonged, refused to attend.

Mary's illusion was short-lived: she was no sooner in Bothwell's power, than she realized what sort of a master she had taken unto herself. Vulgar, brutal and ill-tempered, he seemed to have been selected by Providence to avenge the errors which he had instigated, or helped to commit. His treatment of her soon became so outrageous that Mary, driven beyond endurance, one day snatched a dagger from Erskine, who was present with Melville at one of their scenes, and tried to stab herself, crying that she preferred to die rather than to live in such misery. And yet, incomprehensible as it may appear, in spite of his incessant and disgusting brutality, Mary always was the first to seek a reconciliation with a child's submissive affection, forgetting that she was a woman and a queen.

However, these attractions in public gave the nobles the pretext which they wanted to rise in revolt.

The Earl of Mar, governor of Mary's infant son, Argyle, Athol, Glencairn, Lindsay, Boyd, and even Morton and Maitland themselves, Bothwell's never-failing confederates, took up arms, for the avowed purpose of avenging the death of the King, and rescuing his son

from the hands of the man who had killed the father, and was keeping the mother in captivity. As for Murray, he had kept completely out of sight during all these last events, being in Fifeshire when the King was murdered: three days before Bothwell's trial, he asked and obtained his sister's permission to travel on the continent.

The uprising took place so suddenly, that the confederated lords, whose plan was to possess themselves of the persons of Mary and Bothwell by surprise, expected to succeed at the first attempt, They were being entertained by Lord Borthwick, and were at table, when they were informed that the castle was surrounded by a considerable force of armed men. The King and Queen suspected that they were the cause of this demonstration, and as they had no means of resistance, Bothwell donned the costume of a groom, and Mary that of a page; in this guise they rode out of one gate, as the confederates were entering at another.

The fugitives withdrew to Dunbar, where they assembled all Bothwell's friends and made them sign a sort of confederation whereby they agreed to defend the Queen and her husband. About this time Murray arrived from France, and Bothwell presented the act of association to him as well. But Murray refused to affix his signature: he maintained that it was insulting to him to suggest that he needed to bind himself in writing to defend his sister and his Queen. His refusal led to an altercation between him and Bothwell, and Murray, faithful to his system of neutrality, retired to his estates, and left the affairs of the realm to follow without him the disastrous course upon which they had entered.

Meanwhile the confederates, having missed their aim at Borthwick, did not feel strong enough to attack Bothwell at Dunbar, but marched upon Edinburgh, where

they were in correspondence with a man in whom Bothwell placed implicit confidence. This man was James Balfour, governor of the castle, the same who superintended the preparation of the mine by which Darnley was blown up, and whom Bothwell met as he entered the garden at Kirk-of-Field. Balfour turned over Edinburgh Castle to the confederates, and also placed in their hands a little silver casket, with a cipher consisting of an F surmounted by a crown, which indicated that it had belonged to François II. It was, in fact, a gift to the Queen from her first husband, which she had passed on to Bothwell.

Balfour asserted that the casket contained valuable papers which, under existing circumstances, might be of the very greatest service to Mary's enemies. The confederated lords opened it, and found therein the three letters, forged or genuine, which we have cited, the marriage contract between Mary and Bothwell, and twelve pieces of poetry in the Queen's handwriting. As Balfour said, it was a lucky find for Mary's enemies: indeed it was worth much more than a victory, which would simply put the Queen's life in their hands, while Balfour's treachery betrayed her honor to them.

Bothwell, in the meantime, had been levying troops, and believed that he was strong enough to take the field. Consequently he put his army in motion, without awaiting the Hamiltons, who were assembling their vassals, and on the 15th of June, 1567, the opposing forces came face to face. Mary, who was determined to try to avoid bloodshed, sent the French ambassador to the confederates to urge them to lay down their arms. But they replied that the Queen was in error in taking them for rebels: that they were in arms against Bothwell, not against her. Thereupon the King's friends did what

they could to put an end to the negotiations and begin the battle; but it was too late. The soldiers had found out that they were defending the cause of a single man and that they were expected to fight to gratify a woman's whim, and not for their country's good; so they exclaimed that, since Bothwell alone was aimed at, Bothwell might defend his own cause. And he, as conceited and blustering as ever, caused proclamation to be made that he stood ready to prove his innocence, sword in hand, against any person who should dare to maintain that he was guilty.

On the instant every man of noble birth in the opposite camp accepted the challenge; eventually all others gave way to those who were reputed the most valorous, and Kirkaldy of Grange, Murray of Tullibardine, and Lord Lindsay of the Byres, defied him one after another. But whether his courage failed him, or whether when the crucial moment came he found that he did not himself believe in the justice of his cause, he resorted to such extraordinary pretexts to evade the combat, that even the Queen was ashamed, and his most devoted friends began to murmur.

Thereupon Mary, in view of the alarming disposition which was manifest among their own forces, determined not to risk a battle. She sent a herald to Kirkaldy of Grange, who commanded an advanced post. As he came forward without suspicion to talk with the Queen, Bothwell, enraged at his own cowardice, ordered a soldier to fire upon him. But Mary, herself, interposed, forbidding any violence to be done him, under pain of instant death to the offender. At the same time, the report of Bothwell's rash order was spread broadcast through the army, and the mutterings thereat were so threatening that it was clear to him that his cause was lost forever.

Such was evidently the Queen's opinion as well, for the outcome of her conference with Kirkaldy was an agreement on her part to abandon Bothwell, and join the camp of the confederates, on condition that they should ground their arms before her, and escort her back to Edinburgh in Queenly guise. Kirkaldy returned to the nobles with her conditions, and promised to return the next morning with a satisfactory reply.

But, when the parting with Bothwell was at hand, Mary was seized anew with that fatal passion for him which she never could master; she was so overcome by grief, that she wept bitter tears, and publicly declared her purpose to send word to Kirkaldy that all negotiations were broken off. But Bothwell realized that his life was no longer safe in the camp, so he himself was the one to insist that matters should be left as they were. Leaving Mary in tears, he mounted his horse and rode off at full speed, nor did he draw rein until he reached Dunbar.

On the following morning, at the appointed hour, the the arrival of Kirkaldy of Grange was announced by the trumpets of the heralds. Mary at once mounted and rode out to meet him; as he dismounted to salute her, she said:

"My Lord, I place myself in your hands, on the conditions which you made known to me on the part of my nobles, and here is my hand in token of my entire confidence."

Kirkaldy put his knee to the ground, and respectfully kissed the Queen's hand; then rose and, taking her horse by the bridle, led him toward the camp of the confederates.

All the nobility and gentry in the army received her with the utmost respect and left nothing for her to desire

in that regard; but it was not so with the soldiers and common people. As soon as she reached the second line, which was made up of them, there was much ominous muttering, and several voices cried aloud:

"To the stake with the adulteress! to the stake with the parricide!"

Mary endured these insults with stoical courage; but a far worse trial was in store for her. Suddenly she saw before her eyes a banner, on one side of which the King was represented lying dead in the fatal garden, and on the other the young prince on his knees, with clasped hands and uplifted eyes, with the device: "Judge and avenge my cause, O Lord!"

Mary drew in her horse at this sight, and started to turn back; but she had only taken a few steps when the accusing banner barred her passage again. Wherever she went, she encountered that ghastly apparition. For two mortal hours she had before her eyes, turn them as she might, the King's body crying for vengeance, and the young prince, his son, praying God to punish the assassins.

At last, she could bear the fatal sight no longer; she cried aloud, and fell back upon her saddle, unconscious, and would have fallen to the ground had not those who were near supported her.

In the evening she entered Edinburgh, still preceded by the cruel banner. Already she seemed much more like a prisoner than a queen, for she had not had an instant during the day to give to her toilet, and her hair was flying in every direction, her face was pale and bore the marks of tears, and her clothes were covered with dust and mud. As she rode farther and farther into the city, the hooting and cursing of the crowd became more and more noticeable. At last, half dead with fatigue,

and bowed down with grief and shame, she reached the lord-provost's mansion. There the whole population of Edinburgh crowded into the square, with cries which from time to time assumed a terrifying and ominous tone. Again and again Mary essayed to approach the window, hoping that the mere sight of her, which she had so often found to be irresistible, would disarm the howling multitude. But each time her eyes fell upon that ghastly banner, waving between her and the people like a blood-stained curtain, a terrible interpreter of the feelings of the multitude.

And yet this ebullient hatred was directed against Bothwell rather than against the Queen; in Darnley's widow they were hunting Bothwell. The curses were aimed at Bothwell; Bothwell was the adulterer, Bothwell was the murderer and the coward, while Mary was the weak, infatuated woman, who gave fresh proof of her infatuation that same night.

As soon as the darkness had caused the crowd to disperse, and quiet was in some degree restored, Mary's thoughts, being no longer engrossed by her own danger, at once recurred to Bothwell whom she had been compelled to abandon, and who was at that moment an outlaw and a fugitive, whereas she, as she supposed, was about to resume the title and authority of Queen. With a woman's never-failing confidence in the power of her own love, by which she always measures the love of another, she believed that Bothwell's chief regret was not the loss of wealth and power, but of herself. She therefore wrote him a long letter, wherein, forgetting herself entirely, she promised, with protestations of the most devoted affection, that she would never abandon him, but would summon him to her side as soon as the confederate lords should separate, and make it possible

for her to do so. When the letter was finished, she called a soldier, gave him a purse filled with gold, and commanded him to carry the letter to Dunbar, where Bothwell should be, and if he was no longer there, to follow him until he overtook him.

Then she went to bed, and slept soundly, for, bitterly unhappy though she was, she believed that she had applied a soothing balm to greater unhappiness than her own.

The next morning the Queen was awakened by the tread of an armed man in her room. She was astonished and alarmed in equal measure at this disregard of etiquette, which boded no good. She set up in bed, and, putting aside the curtains, saw Lord Lindsay, of the Byres, standing before her. He was, as she knew, one of the oldest and most inveterate of her enemies, so that it was in a voice which she tried in vain to render firm that she asked him what he wanted with her at such an hour.

"Do you know this writing, Madame?" Lindsay demanded in a harsh voice, as he handed the Queen the letter she had written to Bothwell during the night, which the soldier had handed to the confederated lords, instead of delivering it to the person to whom it was addressed.

"Yes, my Lord," the Queen replied, "but am I a prisoner, pray, that my correspondence is intercepted? or is it no longer permissible for a wife to write to her husband?"

"When the husband is a traitor, Madame," Lindsay replied, "it is not permissible for a wife to write to her husband, unless the wife be involved in his treason: which seems to me abundantly proven, however, by your promise to recall the villain."

"My Lord," cried Mary, "you forget that you are speaking to your Queen."

"There was a time, Madame," Lindsay retorted, "when I would have addressed you in softer tones, and with my knee on the ground, although it consorts but ill with our old Scotch character to take pattern by your French courtiers. But for some time past, thanks to your fickle amours, you have kept us so much in the field with our harness on our backs, that our voices have grown hoarse in the cold night air, and our stiffened knees refuse to bend in their armor. You must take me as I am therefore, Madame, now that you are no longer free to select your own favorites."

Mary turned deathly pale at this failure of respect, to which she was not as yet accustomed, but she restrained her wrath as well as she could.

"And yet, my Lord," she said, "however well disposed I may be to take you as you are, I must at least know in what capacity you thus intrude upon me. The letter which you hold in your hand would seem to indicate that you come as a spy, were it not that the readiness with which you enter my chamber without announcement leads me to think that I am to look upon you as a gaoler. Pray have the kindness to tell me by which of those two names I shall call you."

"By neither, Madame, for I am nothing more nor less than your traveling companion, the commander of the detachment which is to escort you to Lochleven Castle, your future residence. But I shall be obliged to leave you there as soon as we arrive, in order to return hither and assist the confederate lords to choose a Regent for the kingdom."

"And so it was as a prisoner and not as Queen, that I placed myself in the hands of Kirkaldy. If I remember

aright, such was not our agreement, but I am glad to learn how much time the nobles of Scotland need to prove false to their sworn engagements."

"Your Grace forgets that these engagements were entered in upon a certain condition."

"Upon what condition, pray?"

"That you should part forever from the murderer of your husband: and here is the proof," he added, pointing to the letter, "that you forgot your promise before we ever thought of recalling ours."

"For what hour is my departure fixed?" said Mary, beginning to weary of the discussion.

"Eleven o'clock, Madame."

"'Tis well, my Lord: as I do not wish to make your Lordship wait, you will have the goodness, as you retire, to send some one to help me dress, unless I am reduced to the necessity of being my own attendant."

Mary accompanied these words with so imperious a wave of her hand, that Lindsay bowed and went out without speaking, however anxious he may have been to retort. A moment later Mary Beaton entered the room.

The Queen was ready at the appointed time: she had suffered so bitterly at Edinburgh that she left it without the least regret. A litter had been prepared for her, it may have been to spare her a repetition of the humiliation of the preceding day, or to conceal her departure from those who might still be considered her partisans. Mary entered the litter without a word of remonstrance, and after a journey of two hours arrived at Duddingston. A small boat was waiting there, and set sail as soon as she was on board; the next morning, at daybreak, she landed on the other side of the Forth, in the County of Fife.

A halt was made at Rosythe Castle, just long enough to take breakfast, after which the little party at once

took the road again, for Lord Lindsay announced that he was anxious to reach his destination that evening. Just as the sun was sinking Mary espied the lofty towers of Lochleven Castle, gilded by its dying rays.

The castle is built upon a small island in the centre of the lake of the same name. The royal prisoner was undoubtedly expected, for as soon as the escort reached the shore of the lake Lord Lindsay's squire unfolded his banner, which had thus far remained in its case, and waved it from right to left, while his master blew a blast upon a little hunting-horn which he wore at his side. Immediately a boat put off from the island, and came toward the party, impelled by four sturdy rowers, who soon traversed the space which lay between. Mary stepped aboard without speaking, and seated herself at the stern, while Lord Lindsay and his squire stood before her. As her guardian seemed no more inclined to speak than she to reply, she had abundant leisure to examine her future abode.

The castle, more properly speaking the fortress, of Lochleven, was sombre and gloomy enough under the most favorable circumstances, from its position and the character of its architecture; but the hour at which Mary's eyes first fell upon it made its general effect even more depressing. So far as one could judge through the mists which rose from the lake, it was one of those massive structures of the twelfth century, which are so tightly closed to light and air that they seem like the stone-armor of giants. As she drew near, Mary could distinguish the outlines of two great round towers which stood at opposite corners and imparted to the building the forbidding aspect of a State prison. A clump of ancient trees, which grew against the northern front, shut in by a high wall, or rampart, and seemed to be growing out

of the bare rock, completed the picture. On the other hand, if she looked away from the castle to the west or north, the view, ranging from isle to isle, stretched away over the vast plain of Kinross, while toward the south it was bounded by the serrated peaks of Ben Lomond, whose foot-hills sloped down to the shore of the lake.

Three persons were awaiting Mary at the gateway of the castle, Lady Douglas, William Douglas, her son, and a child of twelve, who was called Little Douglas, a distant relative of the family at the castle. As may be imagined, the greetings between Mary and her hosts were very brief; the Queen was shown to her apartment, which was on the first floor with windows looking upon the lake, and was soon left alone with Mary Seyton, the only one of the four Marys who was permitted to accompany her.

Brief as was the interview, and few and guarded as were the words which passed between the prisoner and her gaolers, Mary had had time, taking what she saw in connection with what she already knew, to form a reasonably exact conception of the new actors who were to play parts in the drama of her life.

Lady Lochleven, wife of Lord William Douglas, concerning whom we said a few words in the early part of this history, was a woman of some fifty-five to sixty years, who had been beautiful enough in her youth to attract the favorable notice of James V., and had by him a son, the same Murray who has already been so prominent a figure in Mary's life, and whom she always treated as a brother, despite his bar sinister. For a moment Lady Lochleven cherished the hope of becoming the King's wife, his passion for her seemed to have sunk so deep in his heart; and it was quite possible that her hope might be fulfilled, for the family of Mar, to which

she belonged, was the peer of the oldest and noblest families in Scotland. But unfortunately for her, certain rumors which were current among the young noblemen of the day came to James' ears. It was said that the beautiful favorite divided her favors between her royal lover and another whom she had taken from the lowest order of the common people, undoubtedly from curiosity to see what they were like. It was said, furthermore, that this Porterfield was really the father of the child, who had already received the name of James Stuart, and whom the King was bringing up as his son at the Monastery of St. Andrews. These rumors, whether they were true or false, whether they were set afloat as harmless gossip or with malicious intent, checked James V., just as he was on the point of manifesting his regard for her who had presented him with a son, by raising her to the rank of queen. Instead of marrying her himself, he requested her to select a husband among the nobles of his court; and, as she was exceedingly lovely and the King's favor was understood to accompany the marriage, Lord William Douglas of Lochleven, upon whom her choice fell, made no resistance whatever.

However, in spite of the direct protection which James V. extended to her so long as he lived, Lady Douglas was never able to forget that she had had her finger upon a much loftier station. She therefore conceived a bitter hatred for the woman who, in her eyes, had usurped her place, and poor Mary naturally inherited Lady Douglas' intense animosity toward her mother, which came to the surface in the few words the two women exchanged when they met. As she grew older, Lady Douglas, either because she really regretted her past errors, or from policy, had become a prude and a puritan; so that, at the time of which we are writing,

the natural acrimoniousness of her temperament was intensified by the rigid principles of the religion she had adopted.

William Douglas, the eldest son of the Lord of Lochleven, and half-brother of Murray through his mother, was a man of thirty-five or six, endowed with great physical strength, with harsh, strongly marked features, and red hair and beard, like all of the younger branch. He had fallen heir to the deadly hatred which the Douglases had cherished against the Stuarts for a century past, and which had borne fruit in innumerable conspiracies, rebellions and murders. According as fortune smiled or frowned upon Murray, the rays of the fraternal constellation shone or ceased to shine upon William Douglas. He had come to feel, therefore, that his own life was dependent upon the life of another, and had devoted himself, body and soul, to the interests of that other, with whose fortunes his own fortune rose and fell.

The fall of Mary, which must inevitably result in the elevation of Murray, was therefore matter for self-congratulation to him, and the confederates could have made no better choice than to entrust the care of their prisoner to the instinctive ill-will of Lady Douglas and the shrewd hatred of her son.

Little Douglas was, as we have said, a child of twelve, left an orphan some months before, whom the Lochlevens had taken into their family, where they made him pay dear for the bread they gave him by the harshest of harsh treatment. The result was that the child, who had the Douglas pride and capacity for hatred, and knew that his birth was equal to that of his haughty relatives, although his fortune was inferior to theirs—the result was, that the gratitude which he felt in

the first instance had changed to a lasting and intense hatred. It used to be said that among the Douglases there was a certain age for love, but none for hate. The child felt his weakness and isolation, and locked up his thoughts in his own bosom with a force of character far beyond his years. Humble and submissive in his demeanor, he was biding his time until he should become a young man, and could take his leave of Lochleven, and perhaps be revenged for the supercilious patronage of those who dwelt there. The sentiments we have described did not, however, extend to all the members of the family, and the child's hatred for William Douglas, was no deeper rooted in his heart than his love for George, the second of Lady Lochleven's sons, whom we have not mentioned hitherto, because he was absent from the castle when the Queen arrived, so that we have had as yet no opportunity to present him to our readers.

George was at this time about twenty-five years old. By a singular chance, which his mother's youth led Lord William Douglas to interpret unfavorably to his own honor, this second son possessed none of the distinctive Douglas features, which were full red cheeks, large ears, and red hair. So that poor George, who had received from nature pale cheeks, deep blue eyes and black hair, was an object of utter indifference to his father and of his elder brother's hatred, from his first appearance in the world. As far as his mother was concerned George had never been, in appearance at least, honored with any very deep maternal affection, whether because she in good faith shared her husband's surprise at the striking variation of feature, or because she knew the explanation of it, and reproached herself in secret. It followed that the young man, who was from his childhood made the plaything of an inexplicable

fatality, had grown to manhood like a wild shrub full of strength and vigor, but uncultivated and neglected. Since his fifteenth year, they had become accustomed to his unexplained absences, which were easily susceptible of explanation in the indifference with which every one regarded him. Only at rare intervals did he make his appearance at the castle, like those migratory birds which always return to the same spot, but rest there for an instant only, before flying away again to some unknown quarter of the globe.

The instinctive consciousness of fellowship in misfortune drew George and Little Douglas together. When George saw how the child was abused by the whole household he conceived a strong friendship for him, and when the little fellow felt the warm breath of love penetrate the atmosphere of indifference which surrounded him, he turned to George with open arms and heart. One day when the child had committed some trivial fault, and William Douglas had his dog-whip in the air to strike him, George, who was sitting deep in melancholy thought upon a stone, rushed at his brother, snatched the whip from his hands and threw it far away. William drew his sword at this insult, and George his, and the two brothers, who had hated one another for twenty years like the deadliest enemies, were on the point of seeking each other's lives, when Little Douglas, who had picked up the whip, knelt in front of William, handed him the dishonoring weapon, and said:

"Strike me, cousin; I deserve it."

The child's interposition gave the young men time to reflect: they were terrified at the crime they were so near committing, and silently returned their swords to the scabbards; then separated, each going his own way. That episode lent new strength to the bond of friendship

between George and the child, and on the latter's part it had grown to be downright worship.

We have dwelt upon all these details at wearisome length, perhaps, but we feel sure that our readers will forgive us when they see of how much importance they are in the sequel.

Such was the family, less George, who, as we have seen, was absent when the Queen arrived, with whom Mary's lot was cast. In an instant she fell from the very zenith of power to the condition of a captive, for she had no doubt, from the day after her arrival, that that was her standing as an inmate of Lochleven Castle. That morning Lady Lochleven waited upon her, and with embarrassment and spleen poorly disguised under a pretence of respectful indifference, requested Mary to go with her to inspect those portions of the fortress which were set aside for her use. She led her through three rooms, one of which was pointed out as her sleeping apartment, another as a parlor, and the third as a reception room; she then preceded the Queen down a spiral staircase which led to the great hall of the castle, and so across the hall into the garden. It was a small square plot of ground, made into a flower-garden, with an artificial fountain in the centre; there were also a few trees, the tops of which Mary saw above the high wall, when she arrived. The garden was entered through a low gateway, and there was a similar one in the opposite wall, which opened upon the lake. Like all the gates and doors of the castle, the keys of which never left the belt or the pillow of William Douglas, it was guarded night and day by a sentinel. It formed her whole domain, who but yesterday had at her disposal the palaces, plains and mountains of a whole realm.

When Mary returned to her apartments she found

breakfast served and William Douglas standing by the table: he was there to perform the duties of carver and taster for the Queen. Notwithstanding their bitter hatred for Mary, the Douglases would have looked upon it as an ineffaceable stain upon their honor if any mishap should befall the prisoner while she was an inmate of their castle. In order that she might herself feel no apprehension in that regard, William Douglas, in the capacity of castellan, chose not only to carve the Queen's food in her presence, but also to taste all the dishes which were served at her table, as well as the water and the different wines which were brought to her.

This precaution caused Mary more regret than consolation, for she realized that, if persisted in, it would make all freedom of conversation at her table impossible during her residence at the castle. The purpose of the proceeding was too noble, however, for her to impute it to her host as a crime, so she resigned herself to his company, revolting as it was to her; but from that day she cut her meals so short that the most protracted dinners while she was at Lochleven lasted barely quarter of an hour.

Two days after her arrival, as Mary took her seat at the breakfast table, she found a letter addressed to her lying on her plate. She recognized Murray's handwriting, and her first feeling was one of unalloyed delight, for her only hope now lay in this brother of hers, to whom she had always been uniformly generous and kind; she had transformed him from simple Prior of St. Andrews into an earl and had bestowed upon him the magnificent domains which formed a part of the ancient Earldom of Murray, but the most signal favor of all was the pardon which she had granted or feigned

to grant him for his share in the murder of Rizzio. Great was her astonishment, therefore, when, upon opening the letter, she found it filled with bitter reproaches for her conduct, coupled with an exhortation to repent, and an asseveration, several times repeated, that she should never regain her liberty. He concluded his letter with the announcement that, despite his distaste for public life, he was forced into accepting the Regency, less out of regard for his country than for his sister, as it was the only means at his command of putting a stop to the dishonoring prosecution which the nobles were determined to bring against her, as the instigator of, or at least the chief accessory to, the death of Darnley. The necessary implication was that her imprisonment was a piece of great good fortune for which she ought to thank God as a vast improvement upon the fate which would have been hers, if he had not interceded for her.

This letter was a perfect thunderclap to Mary; but, as she was determined not to give her enemies an opportunity to exult in her discomfiture, she summoned all her self-control, and said to William Douglas:

"This letter contains intelligence with which you are doubtless familiar, for, although we are not children of the same mother, the writer is related to us both in equal degree, and would not have written to his sister without writing at the same time to his brother; and then, too, like a good son, he must have been in haste to inform his mother of the unexpected honors which have fallen to his lot."

"Yes, Madame," William replied, "we learned yesterday that my brother has been appointed Regent of Scotland, happily for the realm. As his respect for his mother is only equalled by his devotion to his country,

we make bold to hope that he will repair the wrongs which favorites of all ranks and degrees have inflicted upon both alike."

"It is the part of a dutiful son, no less than of a courteous host," retorted Mary, "to go no farther back in the history of Scotland, and not to make the daughter blush for the faults of the father; for I have heard it said that the wrongs of which your lordship complains are of earlier date than that which you name, and that King James V. formerly had favorites of both sexes. To be sure, it is said further that they of the sterner sex showed as little gratitude for his friendship as the others for his love. If you are ill-informed in this matter, there is one who can enlighten you, in case he is still living—a certain Portefeld or Porterfield, I am not sure which, as I find difficulty in remembering and pronouncing the names of these common people; but your noble mother can furnish you with details concerning him."

Having launched that shaft, Mary rose, leaving Douglas beside himself with rage, and withdrew to her bedroom, bolting the door behind her.

She did not appear again during the day, but sat by her window, whence she could at least enjoy the magnificent prospect, which included the plain and village of Kinross; but the vast extent of country which lay before her did but intensify the oppression at her heart when her eyes wandered back from the horizon to the foot of the castle, and the high walls surrounded on all sides by the deep waters of the lake, upon whose broad expanse naught could be seen save a single skiff from which Little Douglas was fishing.

Mary had been for some moments gazing abstractedly at the child who attracted her attention on the evening of her arrival, when suddenly the blast of a horn rang

out from the Kinross shore. On the instant Little Douglas drew in his line and rowed away toward the point whence the signal came, with a strength and skill beyond his years. Mary followed him with her purposeless gaze as he pulled to a part of the shore so far away that the boat dwindled to an almost imperceptible speck. But soon it reappeared, increasing rapidly in size, until she was able to distinguish that it bore a new passenger, who was wielding the oars in such fashion that the skiff fairly flew over the tranquil waters of the lake, ploughing a furrow which sparkled in the rays of the setting sun. Skimming along as swiftly as a bird, it soon was so near that Mary could make out the skillful, sturdy rower to be a young man of twenty-five, with long, black hair, clad in a green velvet doublet, and wearing a mountaineer's cap with an eagle's feather. As he drew near, his back being turned to the castle, Little Douglas leaned over to him and said a few words which made him turn at once toward the Queen. She drew back, instinctively, rather than from any definitely formed fear of being seen, but not so quickly that she did not catch a glimpse of the pale, handsome face of the stranger. When she returned to the window he had passed out of sight behind a corner of the castle.

The most trivial occurrence is sufficient to arouse the curiosity of a prisoner; it seemed to Mary that the young man's face was not altogether unknown to her, but that she had seen him at some previous time. Search her memory as she would, however, she could recall nothing definite, and she finally concluded that she had been deceived by some vague and indistinct resemblance to some other person.

And yet, despite her reasoning, the idea had taken a firm hold upon her mind; she had constantly before

her eyes the little boat skimming over the water toward her window, with the child and the young man aboard, as if they were coming to her assistance. Although there was nothing positive in these prisoner's fancies, she slept more soundly and peacefully that night than she had done since she had been at Lochleven.

When she rose the next morning, she ran to her window; the weather was glorious and everything seemed to smile upon her, water, and sky, and land. Without undertaking to dissect the motive which influenced her action, she declined to go down into the garden before breakfast; but when the door opened she turned quickly around: William Douglas, attended as usual, to perform the duties of taster.

The meal lasted but a short time, and was eaten in perfect silence. As soon as Douglas withdrew, Mary went down to the garden; as she passed through the courtyard she noticed two horses standing there all saddled, indicating the approaching departure of a gentleman and his groom. Was the black-haired young man to take his leave again so soon? Mary did not dare, or did not choose to ask the question. She kept on to the garden, and as she entered took in its whole extent at a glance; it was deserted.

She walked back and forth there for an instant, but soon wearied of it, and returned to her room; as she passed through the court she noticed that the horses were no longer there. She went at once to the window to see if she could discover anything upon the lake which might guide her conjectures, and spied a boat moving away from the island; on the boat were the two horses and their riders, one of whom was William Douglas, and the other a servant of the family.

Mary followed the boat with her eyes until it touched

the shore, where the travelers disembarked, leading their horses, and rode off at full speed, taking the same road by which the Queen had come. As the horses were completely covered with trappings, Mary assumed that Douglas was on his way to Edinburgh. As soon as it had landed its passengers on the opposite shore, the boat returned to the castle.

At that moment Mary Seaton announced that Lady Douglas asked leave to call upon the Queen.

It was the second time that the two women were to stand face to face after long years of hatred on the part of Lady Douglas, and of contemptuous indifference on that of the Queen. With the instinctive coquetry which leads women under any and all circumstances to wish to appear beautiful, especially to other women, Mary motioned with her hand to Mary Seaton, and stood before a small mirror which hung on the wall in a heavy Gothic frame, where she arranged her hair and adjusted the lace about her neck. She then seated herself in her most becoming attitude in the only armchair which the parlor could boast, and said to Mary Seaton with a smile that she might introduce Lady Douglas, who at once entered the room.

Mary's expectation was not disappointed: for all her loathing for James V.'s daughter, and despite the self-control which she believed that she possessed, Lady Douglas could not repress a gesture of amazement, which bore abundant witness to the impression Mary's marvelous beauty produced upon her. She had thought to find her crushed by her misfortunes, pale from ennui, and humbled by captivity, but she was the same calm, beautiful, haughty creature as before.

Mary saw the effect she had produced, and said with an ironical smile, partly to Mary Seaton, who was leaning

on the back of her chair, and partly to her unexpected visitor:

"We are indeed fortunate to-day, for we are to be permitted, it would seem, to enjoy the society of our good hostess, to whom we must express our acknowledgements for having chosen to retain the empty ceremonial of announcing her visit, which she might easily have dispensed with, having the keys of our apartment."

"If my presence irks your Grace," replied Lady Lochleven, "I regret it the more because circumstances make it my bounden duty to inflict it upon you twice each day, at least during the absence of my son, who has been summoned to Edinburgh by the Regent. My purpose in intruding upon you at this time was to inform your Grace of his departure, not with the vain ceremonial which obtains at court, but with the respect which Lady Lochleven owes to every person who has broken bread beneath her roof."

"Our good hostess has misprised our meaning," rejoined Mary with affected affability, "and the Regent himself will bear witness to the pleasure which we have always taken in the companionship of those persons who recall to our mind, even by indirection, our well-beloved father, James V. Lady Douglas, therefore, does us wrong by attributing to chagrin or discourtesy our surprise at her unlooked-for appearance, and her hospitality, which she so courteously proffers, does not afford us sufficient distraction to admit of our voluntarily renouncing that which her visits cannot fail to afford us."

"Unhappily, Madame," retorted Lady Lochleven, whom Mary kept standing in front of her during this colloquy, "great as is the pleasure which I myself derive from these visits, I shall be compelled to forego them except at the hours I have mentioned. I am too old now

to endure fatigue, and have always been too proud to submit to sarcasm."

"I' faith, Seaton," exclaimed Mary, as if struck by a sudden thought, "we had quite forgotten that Lady Lochleven, having acquired the right to sit in the presence of her sovereign at the court of the King, my father, ought surely to enjoy the same right in the prison of the Queen, his daughter. Bring a stool, Seaton, that we be not so soon deprived, through failure of memory on our part, of the society of our amiable hostess. Or," she continued, rising and indicating her own chair to Lady Lochleven, who was preparing to withdraw, "if a stool beseems you not, my Lady, take this armchair; you will not be the first of your family to sit in my place."

To this last allusion to the usurpation of Murray, Lady Lochleven was doubtless upon the point of making some bitter retort, when the young man with black hair appeared in the doorway unannounced, and approached Lady Lochleven without saluting Mary.

"Madame," he said, bowing, "the boat which set my brother ashore has returned, and one of the men who accompanied him is entrusted with an urgent message for you which William forgot to communicate himself."

With that he saluted the old lady respectfully once more, and at once left the room, without so much as looking toward the Queen, who was deeply wounded by his impertinence; she turned to Mary Seaton, and said with her usual calmness of manner:

"What did we hear, Seaton, of certain rumors derogatory to the fair fame of our worthy hostess apropos of a youth with pale cheeks and raven hair? If this youth, as I have every reason to believe, has grown to be the young man who left us but now, I am ready to assure all

doubting souls that he is a downright Douglas, not in the matter of courage, concerning which we have no means of judging, but in the matter of insolence, of which he has just given us abundant proof. Let us withdraw, little one," continued the Queen, leaning upon Mary Seaton's arm, "for our good hostess may feel called upon, for courtesy's sake, to bear us company longer, whereas we know that she is impatiently awaited elsewhere."

With these words, Mary retired to her bed-room, while the old lady, utterly overwhelmed by the flood of satire the Queen had poured out upon her, withdrew, muttering:

"Yes, yes, he is a Douglas, and I trust that with God's help we will prove it."

The Queen's strength did not abandon her so long as it was sustained by her enemy's presence; but the moment she was left with no other witness of her weakness than Mary Seaton she threw herself into a chair and fell to weeping bitterly. In very truth she had received a cruel blow: until that day no man had ever come near her without doing homage to the majesty of her royal rank, or to her beauty of feature. And lo! the very man upon whom she had instinctively founded hopes of deliverance, without knowing why, insulted her twice over, both as queen and as woman.

She kept her room until evening. At the dinner-hour Lady Lochleven mounted to the Queen's apartments, arrayed in her robe of honor, and followed by four servants bearing the different dishes of which the prisoner's repast was to consist. They were followed by the old steward of the castle, with his gold chain of office around his neck and his ivory cane in his hand, as on ceremonious occasions. The servants placed the dishes on the

table, and waited in silence until it should please the Queen to take her place at the table. But when the bed-room door opened, it was to admit Mary Seaton instead of the Queen.

"Madame" she said, "her Grace has not been well during the day, and will take nothing this evening; it will be useless, therefore, for you to wait longer."

"Permit me to hope," Lady Lochleven replied, "that she will change her mind; at all events, bear witness that I acquit myself of my duty."

Thereupon a servant handed her bread and salt upon a silver plate, while the steward, who performed the duties of carver in William Douglas's absence, served her with a small portion of each of the dishes on the table.

"So the Queen will not appear again to-day?" Lady Lochleven inquired, when this operation was at an end.

"Such is her Majesty's determination," Mary Seaton replied.

"In that case our presence is useless; but the table is served, and if her Grace has need of aught she has but to call."

Therewith Lady Lochleven withdrew with the same unbending dignity which marked her coming; the four servants and the steward followed her.

As the mistress of the house had foreseen, the Queen yielded at length to Mary Seaton's entreaties and left her chamber about eight in the evening; she took her place at the table, waited upon by her only remaining lady of honor, and ate sparingly; then she rose and went to the window.

It was one of those superb summer evenings, when all nature seems to be making holiday. The sky was studded with stars, which were reflected in the lake

below, and in their midst, like a star of greater brilliancy, shone the flame of a torch at the stern of a small boat. By the light which it shed the Queen recognized George and Little Douglas fishing. Despite her longing to take advantage of the beautiful evening and to take her fill of the pure night air, the sight of the youth who had put so gross an outrage upon her during the day affected her so keenly that she at once closed her window and returned to her bed-room. She lay down, and requested her companion in captivity to read certain prayers aloud to her; but she could not sleep, so great was her excitement, so she rose again, and throwing on her dressing-gown, resumed her seat at the window: the boat had disappeared.

Mary sat for a great part of the night gazing abstractedly into the vast expanse of heaven or across the dark waters of the lake. Notwithstanding the disturbing nature of the thoughts which filled her brain, she experienced great physical relief from the gentle breath of the pure, sweet air, and her rapt contemplation of the silent, peaceful night. The result was that she awoke the next morning more tranquil and more resigned. Unfortunately, the sight of Lady Lochleven, who made her appearance at the breakfast hour, to perform the duties of taster, brought back all her irritability. Still, matters might perhaps have passed off without clashing, if Lady Lochleven had retired after tasting the different dishes, instead of remaining standing by the buffet. But her persistence in standing by her throughout the meal, although it may have been really intended as a mark of respect, seemed to the Queen intolerable tyranny.

"Little one," she said to Mary Seaton, "have you so soon forgot that our excellent hostess yesterday be-

moaned the fatigue which it cost her to remain upon her feet? Bring one of the two stools which furnish forth our royal apartments, and be careful not to select the one with the broken leg."

"If the appointments of Lochleven Castle are in such a lamentable plight, Madame, it is the fault of the Kings of Scotland; the poor Douglases have had so little share in the favor of their sovereigns for nearly a century, that they have been unable to maintain the splendid establishments of their ancestors, or even to compete with simple commoners in that regard; and there was once a musician in Scotland, who, as I am told, spent more than their yearly income in a single month."

"They who are so expert in helping themselves, my Lady," rejoined the Queen, "stand in no need of gifts. The Douglases, methinks, have lost nothing by waiting, and there is not a younger son of that illustrious family who may not to-day aspire to the most eminent alliances. Verily, 'tis pity that our sister the Queen of England has, as it is said, taken a vow to remain a virgin."

"Or that the Queen of Scotland is not the widow of her third husband," interposed Lady Lochleven. "However," the old lady continued, as if suddenly remembering herself, "I do not say that by way of reproach to your Grace, for the Catholics regard marriage as a sacrament, and by the same token receive it as often as possible."

"Therein lies the distinction between them and the Huguenots," Mary retorted, "for they have not equal respect for it, and therefore think that under certain circumstances they are justified in dispensing with it altogether."

At this terrible shaft of sarcasm Lady Lochleven took a step toward the Queen, holding in her hand the knife

that she had just used to cut off a morsel of the meat which was given her to taste; but the Queen rose and stood facing her so calmly and majestically that involuntary respect, or shame of her first impulse, caused her to drop the weapon; and as she could find no words strong enough to express what she felt, she motioned to the servants to follow her, and left the room with such dignity as her wrath permitted her to assume.

As soon as the door closed behind her, the Queen resumed her seat, beaming with delight and triumph at the victory she had won; and ate with better appetite than she had done since she became a prisoner, while Mary Seaton, in an undertone, but without the least failure of respect, was deploring the fatal gift of satirical rejoinder which Mary had received from heaven, and which was one of the prime causes of her misfortunes. But the Queen laughed at her reflections, saying that she was curious to see how her worthy hostess would bear herself at dinner.

After breakfast, the Queen went down to the garden; the gratification of her pride had restored in part her former gay humor, and as she noticed a mandolin lying on a chair in the hall as they passed through, she commanded Mary Seaton to take it, so that she might see, she said, whether she still retained aught of her former talent. She was, in truth, one of the most accomplished musicians of the time, and played admirably, so says Brantôme, on the lute and *viole d'amour*, an instrument closely resembling the mandolin.

When they reached the garden, the Queen sat down in the darkest corner of the shrubbery, and there, having tuned her instrument, she began to touch the strings lightly and with animation, but gradually the chords she struck became sad and mournful, at the same time

that her features took on an expression of profound melancholy. Mary Seaton watched her anxiously, although she had been long accustomed to these sudden changes of mood in her mistress, and she was about to ask the reason of the gloomy veil which had suddenly overspread her features, when Mary began to sing in a low voice, and as if for her own ear alone, the following verses:

Antres, prés, monts et plaines
Rochers, forêts et bois,
Ruisseaux, fleuves, fontaines,
Où perdu je me vois,
D'une plainte incertaine
De sanglots tout pleine,
Je veux chanter,
La misérable peine
Qui me fait lamenter.

Mais qui pourra entendre
Mon souper gémissant?
Ou qui pourra comprendre
Mon ennui languissant?
Sera-ce cet herbage,
Ou l'eau de ce rivage,
Qui, s'écoulant,
Porte de mon visage
Ce ruisseau distillant?

Hélas! non, car la plaie
Cherche en vain guérison,
Qui pour secours essaie,
Aux choses sans raison.
Il vaut mieux que ma plainte
Raconte son atteinte
Amèrement
A toi qui as contrainte
Mon âme en tel tourment.

O, déesse immortelle,
Ecoute donc ma voix,
Toi qui tiens en tutelle,
Mon pouvoir sous tes lois,
Afin que si ma vie
Se voit en bref tarie,
Ta cruauté,
La confesse périe
Par ta seule beauté.

On voit bien que ma face
S'écoule peu à peu,
Comme la froide glace
A la chaleur du feu.
Et néanmoins la flamme
Qui me brûle et m'enflamme
De passion,
N'émeut jamais ton âme
D'aucune affection.

Et cependant ses arbres,
Qui sont autour de moi,
Ces rochers et ces marbres
Savent bien mon émoi.
Bref, rien dans la nature
N'ignore ma blessure,
Hors seulement
Toi, qui prends nourriture
De mon cruel torment.

Mais s'il t'est agréable
De me voir misérable
En tourment tel,
Mon malheur déplorable
Soit alors immortel.

The last lines were hardly audible, as if the Queen were at the end of her strength, and at the same time the mandolin slipped from her hands and would have fallen to the ground had not Mary Seaton thrown herself on her knees and caught it. She knelt there for some time at her mistress's feet, gazing silently into her face, and as she saw that she was sinking deeper and deeper in gloomy abstraction, she asked hesitatingly:

"Did those verses recall sad memories to your Majesty's mind?"

"Oh! yes," was the reply, "they reminded me of the poor boy who wrote them."

"May I, without being impertinent, ask your grace to tell me who was the author?"

"Alas! he was a gallant, noble, handsome youth, devoted and impulsive, who would be protecting me today, had I but protected him then; but his forwardness

seemed to me downright hardihood and his fault a crime. What would you? I loved him not. Poor Chastelard! I was very cruel to him!"

"But you did not bring him to trial; it was your brother; you did not sentence him, but the judges."

"Yes, yes; I know that he was one of Murray's victims, and for that reason, doubtless, the thought of him came to my mind. But I might have pardoned him, Mary, and I was inflexible; I allowed a man whose only crime was that he loved me too well to die upon the scaffold; and now I wonder and repine because I am abandoned by all. Listen, little one; there is one thing which terrifies me beyond measure: when I search my own conscience I find that my fate is deserved; nay, more, that God does not punish me severely enough."

"Such foolish ideas will turn your Grace's brain!" cried Mary; "see to what a pass those wretched verses have brought you, which came to your mind to-day, of all days, just when you were beginning to be yourself once more."

"Alas!" the Queen replied, shaking her head with a long-drawn sigh, "there have been but few days these six years past that I have not repeated those verses to myself, although this to-day is the first time that I have repeated them aloud. He was a Frenchman, too, Mary; they have banished, imprisoned or slain all those who came hither with me from France. Dost remember the vessel which sank before our eyes as we sailed forth from the harbor of Calais? I cried then that it was an ominous portent, and you tried, every one, to console me; now, say you, which was in the right, you or I?"

The Queen had fallen into one of those fits of melancholy for which tears are the only remedy? And so Mary Seaton, realizing that any attempt at consolation

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would be inopportune as well as fruitless, fell in with her mistress's mood, instead of struggling against it. The result was that the Queen, whose sobs were stifling her, at last wept freely, and was greatly relieved thereby; she gradually recovered her self-control, and the paroxysm left her, as such paroxysms always did, firmer and more resolute than before, so that when she returned to her apartment it was impossible to read upon her features the slightest trace of emotion.

The dinner hour drew nigh, and Mary, who in the morning had longed impatiently for it, in order to enjoy her triumph, now viewed its approach with some uneasiness. The bare thought of coming again face to face with that woman, whose pride she had constantly to put down with sarcasm, wearied her anew, after the mental fatigue of the day. She therefore determined to absent herself from dinner as she did the preceding day. She was the more inclined to congratulate herself upon this determination when she learned that on this occasion the duties which the family had undertaken to perform to set the Queen's mind at rest were not performed by Lady Lochleven, but by George Douglas, whom his mother, still chafing over the scene of the morning, sent to replace her. When Mary Seaton informed the Queen that she saw the black-haired youth coming across the court-yard on his way to her apartments, Mary, as we have seen, was well satisfied with the course she had adopted, for the young man's impertinence wounded her more deeply than all the overbearing insolence of his mother.

She was not a little surprised, therefore, when Mary Seaton came to her to say that George Douglas had dismissed the servants, and craved the honor of speaking with her concerning a matter of great importance. The

Queen refused at first, but her attendant said that the young man's manner and bearing were so different from what they had been two days before, that she thought her mistress would make a serious mistake if she refused his request.

Thereupon the Queen rose and with the haughty and majestic air which was so natural to her, entered the adjoining room, and having taken a few steps beyond the door, stopped, and waited with a disdainful expression on her face for George to address her.

Mary Seaton had said no more than the truth: George Douglas was not the same man. He seemed every whit as respectful and timorous as he was insolent and overbearing on the previous occasion. He made a movement toward the Queen, but checked himself when he saw Mary Seaton standing behind her.

"Madame," he said, "I am particularly desirous to speak with your Majesty alone; may I not have that honor?"

"Mary Seaton is as no one in my eyes, Sir; she is my sister, my friend; nay, more than that, she is the companion of my captivity."

"And in each of those capacities, Madame, I have the utmost veneration for her; but what I have to say to your Majesty must be heard by no ears but yours. Therefore, Madame, as the opportunity which this moment affords may not recur, in the name of all that you hold dearest on earth, grant what I ask."

There was an accent of such earnest and respectful entreaty in George's voice that Mary turned to the young girl, and said, with an affectionate gesture:

"Go, little one, but never fear; you shall lose nothing by not hearing. Go."

Mary Seaton withdrew: the Queen followed her with

her eyes, until the door closed behind her, when she turned to George.

"Now, Sir, we are alone," she said; "say on."

But George, in lieu of replying, walked toward the Queen, and put his knee to the floor, and, as he did so, drew a paper from his breast, and handed it to her. Mary took it in amazement, and while she unfolded it gazed fixedly at Douglas, who remained in the same position. Casting her eyes upon the paper, she read what follows:

"We, peers of Scotland, in consideration of the fact that our Queen is held prisoner at Lochleven, and that her faithful subjects are denied access to her person, and since our duty demands that we take measures to assure her safety, do engage and make oath to employ every means in our power to set her at liberty on conditions consistent with her Majesty's honor, the well-being of the kingdom, and to guarantee the lives of those who hold her in prison, provided that they consent to release her; if they refuse we declare that we propose to devote ourselves and our children, friends, servants and vassals, our property and our lives, to the effort to set her at liberty, to assure the welfare of the Prince, and to press forward the punishment of the murderers of the late King. If we are assailed for this step, either as a body or individually, we swear to defend ourselves, and to bear aid to one another, or confess ourselves infamous and perjured. May God help us.

"Signed with our own hands at Dunbarton,

"ANDREWS, ARGYLE, HUNTLY, ARBROATH, GALLOWAY, ROSS, FLEMING, HERRIES, STIRLING, KILWINNING, WILT,(?) HAMILTON, ST. CLAIR."

"And Seaton!" exclaimed Mary; "among all these signatures, I do not see that of my faithful Seaton."

Douglas, still kneeling, drew another paper from his breast, and handed it to the Queen with the same marks of respect. It contained only these few words:

"Trust George Douglas; for your Majesty has no more devoted friend in all your kingdom." SEATON.

Thereupon Mary looked down into Douglas's face with an expression which belonged to her alone: then she held out her hand to assist him to rise.

"Ah!" she said, with a sigh in which there was more joy than sorrow, "now I see that God has not even yet abandoned me, despite my errors; but how can it be that here, in this castle, you—a Douglas—; Oh! I cannot believe it!"

"Madame," George replied, "seven years have passed since I first saw you in France, and seven years have passed since I began to love you."

Mary started, but Douglas put out his hand, and shook his head with an expression of such profound melancholy, that she saw that she could safely listen to what he had to say to her.

"Take heart, Madame," he continued, "I should never have made that avowal, except that it may, by explaining my conduct, lead you to place greater confidence in me. Yes, for seven years I have loved you, but as one loves a star which one cannot attain, or a madonna to whom one can only pray. For seven years I have followed you everywhere, without so much as a look from you, and without ever saying a word or making a gesture to attract your attention. I was upon the Chevalier de Névillon's galley when you came to Scotland; I was among the Regent's troops when you fought with Huntly; I was of your escort when you went to visit the King at Glasgow during his illness; I reached Edinburgh an hour after your departure for Lochleven;

then for the first time it seemed to me that my true mission was revealed to me and that the passion with which I had hitherto reproached myself as a crime was, on the contrary, a signal mark of God's favor. I learned that the nobles were assembled at Dunbarton, and I hastened thither. I pledged my name, my honor and my life, and I obtained from them, because of the ease with which I can pass in and out of this fortress, the privilege of bringing to you the document which they had just signed. Now, Madame, forget all that I have said, except the assurance of my respect and devotion; forget that I am near you; I am used to not being seen; but if you need my life you have but to make a sign, for it has been at your service for seven years."

"Alas!" said Mary, "this morning I was bewailing that I was no longer loved, whereas I ought to bewail the love that is still mine; for the love which I inspire is fatal. Young as I am, Douglas, turn your thoughts back and count the graves I have left along my path. Francois II., Chastelard, Rizzio, Darnley—Oh! it must be something more than love which leads you to adhere to my fortunes now; it must be true, unselfish devotion and heroism, with the more reason, Douglas, because, as you, yourself, said, your love is without possibility of recompense; you understand that?"

"Oh! Madame, Madame," said Douglas, "is it not a recompense beyond my deserts to see you every day, to cherish the hope that I may be instrumental in securing your liberty, and to be certain that if I do not succeed therein, I shall at least die before your eyes."

"Poor boy!" murmured Mary, looking upward, as if she were reading on the heavens the fate of her new partisan.

"Happy Douglas, rather!" cried George, seizing the

Queen's hand and kissing it, with even more respect than love; "happy Douglas! for he has already won from your Majesty more than he dared to hope—a sigh."

"Upon what did you and my friends resolve?" said the Queen, raising him from the humble attitude which he had thus far maintained.

"Nothing as yet," George replied, "for we scarcely had time to speak together; your escape, which would be impossible without me, will be very difficult even with my assistance, and your Majesty saw that it was necessary for me to treat you with absolute disrespect before my mother, so that she might have that confidence in me which procures me the happiness of seeing you to-day; if that confidence on my mother's part or my brother's ever reaches the point that they entrust the keys of the castle to my keeping, you are saved! I beg your Majesty to be surprised at nothing; in public I shall always be a Douglas, that is to say, your enemy, and unless your life should be in danger, I shall not say a word or make a motion which can arouse suspicion of the oath I have sworn to you. But I implore your Grace to remember that, present or absent, whether I speak or keep silent, whether I act or remain inactive, my devotion alone is unchanging and unchangeable. Look every evening in that direction," he continued, walking to the window and pointing to a small house on the hill of Kinross, "and so long as you see a light shining there, you may know that your friends are watching over you, and that you must not lose hope."

"Thanks, Douglas, thanks," said the Queen, "it is inspiring to one's courage to meet with a heart like yours from time to time; oh! thanks!"

"And now, Madame, I must take my leave of your Majesty; to remain longer with you would be to arouse

suspicion, and a single whisper of suspicion concerning my trustworthiness and that light, which is your only beacon of hope, is extinguished and all is dark again."

Therewith Douglas bowed more respectfully than he had yet done and withdrew, leaving Mary with her heart filled with hope and with gratified pride; for the homage which had just been laid at her feet was offered to the woman rather than to the Queen.

It was not long before Mary Seaton knew everything, even Douglas's passion, as the Queen had promised her, and the two women impatiently awaited the coming of darkness, to see whether the star which they were told to expect was twinkling on the horizon. Their hopes were not disappointed; as soon as night fell, the light appeared, and the Queen fairly trembled with delight; nor could her companion induce her to leave the window, where she sat with her eyes fixed upon the little house at Kinross. At last she yielded to Mary's entreaties and consented to go to bed; but twice during the night she rose and stole silently to the window. The light was always burning, and disappeared only at dawn, with its sisters, the stars.

The next morning at breakfast George announced to the Queen the return of his brother William. He was to arrive that same evening, and George arranged to leave Lochleven the following day in order to come to an understanding with the lords who signed the declaration and who had separated at once to raise troops in their respective counties. The Queen could not wisely make any attempt at flight until she could be sure of assembling an army strong enough to take the field, and they were so accustomed to Douglas's silent disappearances and unexpected returns that there was no reason to fear that his departure would arouse suspicion.

Everything happened as George had said; that evening a blast on the horn announced William's arrival; with him was Lord Ruthven, the son of him who murdered Rizzio and died an exile in England of the disease which had taken hold of him before the terrible occurrence in which he played so prominent a part. They were a day in advance of Lord Lindsay of the Byres and Sir Robert Melville, brother of Mary's former ambassador to Elizabeth. The three were entrusted with a mission to the Queen on the part of the Regent.

The next day the old order of things was restored and William Douglas resumed the duties of carver. The breakfast hour came and went, and Mary heard no word of George's departure or the arrival of Lord Ruthven. When she left the table she went to the window, and was hardly there when she heard the horn ring out on shore, and saw a small body of horsemen waiting for the boat to come and take off such of them as proposed to visit the castle.

The distance was too great for Mary to recognize any of them, but it was evident enough from the signals which were being exchanged between the little troop and the occupants of the castle that the newcomers were her enemies. In her uneasiness on that account the Queen did not take her eyes off the boat which went ashore to fetch them. She saw that only two men went aboard, and the boat at once started back to the castle.

As the little craft drew near, Mary's forebodings changed to downright alarm, for in one of the newcomers she fancied that she recognized Lord Lindsay of the Byres, who had escorted her to her prison a week before. It was, indeed, himself, wearing, as usual, a visorless steel helmet, which left exposed his harsh features, made to give expression to brutal passions, and his long black

beard, sprinkled with gray, which fell down over his chest. His body was protected, as if he were going into battle, by his trusty cuirass, once well gilded and polished, but now eaten with rust from much exposure to mist and rain. He wore across his back, as one might wear a quiver, a huge sword, so heavy that both hands were required to wield it, and so long that while the hilt was at the left shoulder, the point reached to the right spur. In a word, he was the same rough soldier, brave to foolhardiness, but brutal and insolent, recognizing nothing but right and brute force, and always ready to resort to brute force when he believed himself in the right.

The Queen was so engrossed by the sight of Lord Lindsay of the Byres that she neglected, until the boat was about to land, to glance at his companion, in whom she recognized Sir Robert Melville. This was some consolation to her, for she knew that, whatever might happen, she could be sure of his secret sympathy, even though he dared not show it. His costume, too, by which it was possible to form an opinion of the man, as it was to form an opinion of Lord Lindsay by his, was strikingly in contrast to that of his companion. It consisted of a black velvet doublet with cap and plume of the same color, the latter kept in place by a gold clasp; his only weapon, offensive or defensive, was a small sword, which he seemed to carry rather to indicate his rank than for purposes of attack or defense. His features and bearing were in keeping with his pacific exterior; his pale face expressed shrewdness and intelligence; his bright eye shone with a mild light, and his winning voice, and slender figure, the latter slightly bent by habit rather than by the burden of years, for he was only forty-five at this time, signified a yielding and compliant disposition.

The presence of this man of peace, however, whose mission probably was to keep an eye on the demon of war, did not allay the Queen's fears, and as the boat passed out of sight around a corner of one of the towers to reach the landing-place in front of the main gateway, she ordered Mary Seaton to go down and try to ascertain what brought Lord Lindsay to Lochleven. She had sufficient confidence in her own strength of will to feel sure that a few moments preparation, whatever the motive of his visit might be, would suffice for her to pose her features, and assume the calm and majestic demeanor which had always made so deep an impression upon her enemies.

When her attendant left her, Mary turned her eyes upon the little house at Kinross, her only resource, but the distance was so great that she could distinguish nothing; furthermore, the shutters seemed to be closed all day, and to open only in the evening, as the clouds, after they have veiled the sky from early morning, move apart at last and allow the lost sailor to see a single star. Nevertheless she stood there like a statue, with her eyes fixed upon the same spot, when Mary Seaton's returning footstep roused her from her rapt contemplation.

"Well, little one?" she asked, turning toward the door.

"Your Majesty was not mistaken; it is Sir Robert Melville and Lord Lindsay, but a third ambassador arrived yesterday with William Douglas, whose name, I greatly fear, is much more hateful to your Majesty than either of those I have mentioned."

"You are in error, Mary," the Queen rejoined: "neither Melville's name nor that of Lindsay is hateful to me; nay, more, the name of Melville, in my present plight, is one of those which it would give me the great-

est pleasure to hear; and while Lord Lindsay's name assuredly does not strike sweetly upon my ear, it is none the less an honorable name, always borne by men who are incapable of treason, rough and ill-mannered though they be. But tell me, prithee, what is this other name, Mary; I am prepared to hear it, as you see."

"Alas! Madame," replied Mary Seaton, "I entreat you to summon all your courage, calm though you be and well prepared; for not only must you hear the name pronounced, but in a few moments you must receive the man who bears it—Lord Ruthven."

She spoke truly: the name produced a terrible effect upon the Queen. It had hardly passed the young girl's lips when Mary uttered a piercing shriek, and clung to the casement for support, turning as pale as death. Mary Seaton rushed to her side to support her, but she held out one hand to check her, and pressed the other against her heart.

"It's nothing," she said, "and I shall be myself again in an instant. Yes, Mary, yes, it is, as you well said, a fatal name, and inseparably connected with a most bitter and painful memory. The demand which such men are commissioned to make upon me is like to be one of terrible import. But it matters not; soon I shall be prepared to receive my brother's ambassadors, for doubtless they come in his name. Do you, little one, see that they enter not, for I needs must have a few moments to recover my wits; you know me; it will not be long."

With that the Queen walked with a firm step to the door of her bed-room.

Mary Seaton was left alone, marveling at the strength of will which made of Mary Stuart, who was such a thorough woman at all other times, a man when danger was near. She went at once to the door to secure it with

the wooden bar which ran through two iron staples, but the bar was taken away, so that there was no way to secure the door on the inside. A moment later she heard some one coming up the stairway, and guessing, by the heavy, resounding step, that it was Lord Lindsay, she looked around once again to see if she could find nothing to replace the bar. But nothing was at hand, so she passed her arm through the staples, determined to let it be broken, rather than allow her mistress to be disturbed one moment before it suited her convenience.

As soon as the steps reached the landing, some one knocked loudly on the door, and a harsh voice cried:

"Come, come, open the door! open at once!"

"By what right," demanded Mary Seaton, "do you thus insolently call upon me to open the door of the Queen of Scotland?"

"By the right which the ambassador of the Regent possesses to enter anywhere in his name; I am Lord Lindsay, and I have come to have speech of Lady Mary Stuart."

"An ambassador is not exempt from the necessity of causing his visit to be announced to a lady, and with the greater reason to a Queen," Mary Seaton retorted, "and though the ambassador be, as he says, Lord Lindsay, he will await his sovereign's leisure, as every noble Scotchman would do in his place."

"By St. Andrew!" cried Lord Lindsay, "open, or I will break down the door!"

"Do nothing of the sort, my Lord, I beg," said another voice, which Mary recognized as Melville's; "let us rather wait a moment for Lord Ruthven, who is not yet ready."

"On my soul!" cried Lindsay, shaking the door

violently, "I will not wait a second." As the door resisted his efforts, he said to the steward:

"Did you not tell me, villain, that the bar had been taken away?"

"And so it has," he replied.

"If that be so, with what is this jade holding the door?"

"With my arm, my Lord, which I have thrust through the staples, as a Douglas did for James I. in the days when the Douglases had black hair instead of red, and were faithful subjects instead of traitors."

"As you know your history so well," retorted Lindsay, "you should remember that that weak barrier failed to check Graham, that Catherine Douglas's arm was broken like a willow wand, and James I. killed like a dog."

"And you, my Lord," replied the dauntless maiden, "should be familiar with the ballad, which has come down to us, and is sung to-day:

Honni soit Robert Graham,
Du roi l'assassin infâme.
Robert Graham honni soit
L'assassin de notre roi.

"Mary," cried the Queen, who had overheard this colloquy from her bed-room, "Mary, I command you to open the door at once, dost hear me?"

Mary obeyed, and Lord Lindsay entered, followed by Melville with lowered head, and hesitating step. Halfway across the second room of the suite Lindsay stopped, and cast an eye around.

"Well, where is she?" he asked; "has she not kept us waiting long enough without, that she keeps us still waiting within? or does she fancy that she is still Queen, for all these walls and bars?"

"Patience, my Lord," Sir Robert mildly remonstrated; "Lord Ruthven has not yet arrived, so let us await his coming, as we can do naught without him."

"Let him wait who chooses," snarled Lindsay, aflame with indignation; "I will not bide her pleasure, but wherever she be, there will I seek her out."

As he spoke he took several steps toward the Queen's bed-room, but at that moment the Queen opened the door, apparently unmoved, either by the visit or the overbearing insolence of the visitor, and she was so lovely withal, and her bearing was so instinct with majesty, that even Lindsay himself was awed to silence by the sight, and bowed respectfully as if in obedience to a superior power.

"We fear we have detained you, my Lord of Lindsay," said the Queen, without other acknowledgment of the salute of the ambassadors than a slight inclination of the head, "but a woman does not willingly receive even her enemies without some minutes spent at the toilette. Men, it is true, are less dependent on such ceremonies," she added, glancing significantly at Lindsay's rusty armor, and stained and torn doublet. "Good morrow, Melville," she continued, disregarding Lindsay's muttered apologies; "welcome to our prison-house, as you were always welcome to our palaces, for I believe you to be the same faithful servant in one as in the other."

Then she turned again to Lindsay, who was watching the door, impatiently awaiting Ruthven.

"You have there a trusty, albeit a somewhat weighty, traveling companion, my Lord," she said, pointing to the sword which he wore slung over his shoulder. "Can it be that you expected to meet, on your way hither, any enemy against whom to employ it? If not, it is a strange

adornment with which to appear before a woman; but it matters not, my Lord, I am too much of a Stuart, I give you warning, to fear a sword, even though it be a naked one."

"It is not out of place here, Madame," replied Lindsay, bringing the weapon round in front of him with the point on the ground, and resting his elbow on the hilt, "for it is an old acquaintance of your family."

"Your ancestors, my Lord, were so brave and so loyal that I venture not to doubt what you say. Marry, so good a blade may well have rendered them good service."

"Yes, Madame, yes, that it did, but it was such service as Kings never forgive. He who performed the service with it was Archibald Bell-the-Cat, and he was girded with it on the day when, to justify his name, he dragged from the tent of your great-grandfather, the third James, his crew of fawning minions, whom he hung over the bridge of Lauder with the halters of his soldiers' horses. With this same sword he slew at one blow in single combat Speirs of Kelspendie, who dared to speak lightly of him in presence of King James IV., trusting to the protection of his master, which was of no more avail against it than was his buckler, which it clove in twain. Upon its master's death, which took place two years later, after the defeat of Flodden, where he left his two sons and two hundred warriors bearing the Douglas name upon the field, it passed to the hands of the Earl of Angus, who drew it from the scabbard when he hunted the Hamiltons out of Edinburgh, which he accomplished so quickly and so thoroughly that the affair was called the 'street-sweeping.' Lastly, your father, James V., saw its glitter at the battle of the bridge of the Tweed, when Buccleuch, incited thereto by him, tried to snatch him from the

guardianship of the Douglases, and twenty-four warriors of the name of Scott remained upon the field."

"How happens it, pray," said Mary, "that such a weapon did not remain as a trophy in the Douglas family? Doubtless it must have required some great emergency to induce the Earl of Angus to part with this modern Caliburn in your favor?"

"Yes, Madame, you say well that it was a great emergency," Lindsay replied, disregarding Melville's gestures of entreaty, "and it has advantage of the others of being so near our own days that you will readily recall it. Know then, Madame, that it was but ten days since upon the field of Carberry-Hill, when the infamous traitor Bothwell dared to challenge to single combat any man who should maintain that he was not guiltless of the murder of the King, your husband. I was the third to tell him to his teeth that he was a murderer; and as he refused to fight with the two others on the pretext that they were simple barons, I, who am an earl, came forward in my turn. Then was it that the noble Earl of Morton gifted me with his good sword that I might fight him to the death. Ah! had his presumption been one grain more, or his cowardice one grain less, I would have done such work with this good steel on his traitorous corpse that the hounds and carrion crows should have found their morsels daintily carved for them."

At these words Mary Seaton and Sir Robert Melville gazed at each other in terror; for the events to which they related were of such recent occurrence that they were, so to speak, still living in the Queen's heart; but she, with incredible calmness and with a scornful smile upon her lips, replied:

"It is easy, my Lord, to slay an enemy who enters

not the lists; but, believe me, had Mary Stuart inherited her father's sword as well as his sceptre, your sword, long as it is, might have proved too short. But as your business with us at this moment, my Lord, is to tell of what you propose to do, rather than of what you have heretofore done, we pray your pardon if we bring your mind back to something of more real interest, for, methinks, you came not hither simply to add a chapter to M. de Brantôme's little treatise, *Des Rodomontades Espagnoles.*"

"You are right, Madame," Lindsay retorted, flushing deep with anger, "and you would know ere this the purpose of our mission if Lord Ruthven did not keep us waiting so unconscionably. But be patient," he added, "it will not be long now, for he comes."

Steps were heard ascending the stairs and approaching the room as he spoke, and at the sound, the Queen, who had endured Lindsay's insults with so much spirit, lost color so perceptibly that Melville, who had not taken his eyes from her face, put out his hand toward her armchair as if to force her into it; but she motioned to him that there was no need, and fixed her eyes upon the door, perfectly calm to all appearances.

Lord Ruthven appeared; it was the first time the Queen had seen the son since Rizzio was murdered by the father.

Lord Ruthven was at once a warrior and a statesman, and his costume on this occasion partook of both characters. It consisted of an embroidered buff coat, suitable for court undress, over which a cuirass could be buckled, transforming it into a warrior's garb. He was pale like his father; like his father he was fated to die young; and his face wore, even more markedly than his father's, that cast of inauspicious melancholy by which the

physiognomists of that time pretended to distinguish those who were predestined to a violent and unhappy death.

Lord Ruthven combined the polished dignity of the courtier with the inflexible firmness of the minister; and so, although he was fully determined to obtain from Mary Stuart, by force if necessary, what he had come to demand in the Regent's name, he, nevertheless, saluted her respectfully, albeit something coldly, as he entered. The Queen acknowledged his salutation with a courtesy. The steward thereupon moved a heavy table provided with writing materials near to the empty armchair and then, at a sign from the two noblemen, left the room, leaving the Queen and her companion with the three ambassadors.

The Queen, assuming that the table and chair were arranged for her, seated herself, and, after a moment's interval, herself broke the silence which was more depressing than any words could possibly be.

"My Lords," she said, "I wait the purpose of your mission; is the message which you have in charge for me of so terrible a nature that two warriors so renowned as Lord Lindsay and Lord Ruthven feel even a momentary hesitation in transmitting it to me?"

"Madame," Ruthven replied, "I come of a race which, as you know, never hesitates to perform its duty, however painful that duty may be; we trust, however, that your captivity has prepared you to listen to what we have to say to you on the part of the Secret Council."

"The Secret Council!" the Queen exclaimed; "by what right, pray, does that body, established by me, assume to act without me? But no matter; I await the message; I presume that it is a petition imploring

my mercy for those men who have dared to lay hands on a power which I hold from God alone."

"Madame," returned Ruthven, who seemed to have taken upon himself the embarrassing role of spokesman, while Lord Lindsay played impatiently with the hilt of his long sword, "it is very painful to me to be compelled to undeceive you on that point; I have not come to seek mercy at your hands, but, on the contrary, to offer you pardon from the Secret Council."

"Me, my Lord! pardon to me!" cried Mary; "subjects offer pardon to their Queen! Why, the idea is so novel and so astounding that my surprise overshadows my righteous anger, and I beg you to continue, instead of ordering you to stop where you are, as I ought, perhaps, to do."

"I will obey you the more willingly, Madame," rejoined Ruthven coolly, "because the pardon is offered only upon certain conditions set forth in these deeds, which will tend to the pacification of the State, so grievously compromised by the misdeeds they are intended to repair."

"May I be permitted to read these documents, my Lord, or am I expected to sign them with my eyes closed, confiding implicitly in the honorable motives of those who present them?"

"No, Madame," Ruthven replied, "the Secret Council is desirous that you should have full cognizance of their contents, for you ought to sign them of your own free will."

"Then read them to me, my Lord; I suppose that that is included among the extraordinary duties you have assumed."

Lord Ruthven unfolded one of the papers which he held in his hand, and read as follows, in his ordinary impassive voice:

"Called at an early age to the administration of the crown and realm of Scotland, we have toiled with the utmost diligence therein; but we have become so wearied and disheartened in body and spirit that we no longer feel able to endure the travail and pain of state affairs; wherefore, since God has blessed us with a son, to whom we are desirous to ensure, even while we live, the succession to the crown which is his by right of birth, we, of the motherly affection we bear to our said son, have renounced and demitted, and by these our letters of free good will, renounce and demit, the crown, government, and guiding of the realm of Scotland in favor of our said son, that he may succeed to us as native prince thereof, as much as if we had been removed by disease and not by our own proper act. And that this demission of our royal authority may have the more full and solemn effect, we give, grant and commit full and free and plain power to our trusty cousins, Lord Lindsay of the Byres and William, Lord Ruthven, to appear in our name before as many of the nobility, clergy and burgesses as may be assembled at Stirling, and there, in our name and behalf, publicly and in their presence, to renounce the crown, guidance and government of this our kingdom of Scotland.

"Signed of our own pleasure, and in witness of the last expression of our royal will, at our Castle of Lochleven, this . . . . . day of June, 1567."

The day of the month was not inserted.

After the reading was concluded, there was a moment of silence.

"Did you hear, Madame?" Ruthven asked at last.

"Yes," Mary made answer, "yes, I heard rebellious phrases which I understood not, and I thought that my ears, which have been for some time wonted to strange

language, were rebels still, and that I was led to think out of regard for your honor, my cousins of Lindsay and Ruthven."

"Madame," Lindsay broke in, out of patience with his long silence, "our honor is little concerned with the opinion of a woman who has been so neglectful in guarding her own."

"My Lord!" Melville ventured to remonstrate.

"Be silent, Robert," said the Queen, "we have in our conscience a buckler as well tempered as that with which my Lord Lindsay is so discreetly equipped, although, to the shame of justice be it said, we no longer have a sword. Say on, my Lord," she continued, turning again to Ruthven; is this *all* my loving subjects require of me! A date and a signature, ah! that is too little for them to ask; that other parchment, which you have kept till last to preserve the proper gradation, doubtless contains something harder to be complied with than merely to yield up a crown which is mine by birthright to a child scarcely more than a year old—to fling down my sceptre and take up a distaff."

"This other paper," said Ruthven, unmoved by the tone of bitter irony adopted by Mary, "is a deed whereby your Grace confirms the decision of the Secret Council, who have appointed your well-beloved brother, the Earl of Murray, Regent of the kingdom."

"What do I hear?" retorted Mary, "the Secret Council considers that it needs my confirmation of an act of such trifling importance? and my well-beloved brother finds it necessary to his peace of mind that it should be my hand which bestows upon him a new title, in addition to those of Mar and Murray which he already owes to me? Why, all this is respectful and touching beyond expression, and I should be greatly in

the wrong were I to make complaint. My Lords," she continued, rising from the seat and changing her tone, "return to those who sent you and say that to such demands Mary Stuart has no reply to make."

"Beware, Madame," said Ruthven, "and remember that your pardon can be granted only on these conditions."

"And if I refuse this generous pardon, what am I then to expect?"

"It is not for me to prejudge your cause, Madame; but your Grace is sufficiently familiar with the laws and the history of Scotland and England to know that murder and adultery are crimes for which more than one queen has suffered the penalty of death."

"Upon what proofs, pray, am I accused of such crimes, my Lord? Pardon my persistence, I beg, but I have so much at stake that I may fairly be permitted to ask the question."

"There is but one, Madame, I admit," replied Ruthven, "but that is unequivocal; it is the hasty marriage of the victim's widow with the principal assassin, and the letters handed us by James Balfour, which established the fact that the culprits had joined their adulterous hearts before it was possible for them to join their blood-stained hands."

"My Lord," cried the Queen, "do you forget a certain banquet at a tavern in London, given by this same Bothwell to the same nobles who accuse him to-day of adultery and murder; do you forget that at the close of that banquet, and upon the very table whereon it had been spread, a document was signed, urging this same woman, to whom you now impute as a crime the rapidity with which she contracted her latest marriage—urging her, I say, to lay aside her widow's weeds for the

bridal veil? For if you have forgotten, my Lords, which would be as little creditable to your temperate habits as to your memory, I will undertake to place that paper before your eyes, for I have preserved it, and it may be that we shall find among the signatures the names of Lindsay of the Byres and Ruthven. O noble Lord Herries!" cried Mary, "O loyal James Melville! You alone were right when you threw yourselves at my feet, entreating me not to contract that marriage, which, as I can plainly see to-day, was naught but a trap set for an ignorant woman by perfidious advisers or disloyal nobles."

"Madame," exclaimed Ruthven, beginning to lose control of himself, notwithstanding his cold impassibility, while Lindsay was giving more noisy and less equivocal symptoms of impatience,—"Madame, all this discussion leads us away from our real object; let us recur to it, I beg you, and do you tell us whether, your life and honor being assured, you will consent to abdicate the throne of Scotland?"

"What pledge shall I have that the promises herein made to me will be kept?"

"Our word, Madame," Ruthven proudly replied.

"Your word, my Lord; that is but a feeble guaranty to offer, when you forget your signature so quickly; have you no trifle to add to it which might give me more confidence than I should feel with it alone?"

"Enough, Ruthven, enough!" cried Lindsay, "see you not that the woman has responded to our proposals only by insults for an hour past?"

"Yes, let us go," said Ruthven, "and blame no one but yourself for it, Madame, on the day when the cord breaks which holds the sword suspended over your head."

"My Lords," cried Melville, "my Lords, in heaven's name, have patience, and make some allowance for one who is accustomed to command, but is to-day forced to obey."

"In God's name, then, remain with her," said Lindsay, turning away, "and try to obtain with your honeyed words what she refuses to our frank and outspoken demand. In a quarter of an hour we will return; in a quarter of an hour let the reply be ready!"

The two noblemen went out, leaving Melville alone with the Queen; and their steps could be counted by the clanking of Lindsay's huge sword on each stair of the staircase.

The moment they were alone Melville threw himself at the Queen's feet.

"Madame," said he, "you said but now that Lord Herries and my brother gave your Majesty certain advice which you regretted not having followed; reflect well, Madame, upon the counsel I will give you now, for it is of greater importance than the other and your regret will be far more bitter if you fail to follow it. Ah! you know not what may happen, you know not of what your brother is capable."

"It seems to me that he has given me to-day sufficient evidence of his powers; what can he do more than he has already done? A public trial! oh! I ask nothing better; let them but leave me free to plead my own cause, and we shall see what judges will dare condemn me?"

"For that reason they will be very careful to do nothing of the kind, Madame; indeed they must needs be mad to think of it when they have you safe in this isolated castle, guarded by your enemies, with no witness but God, who avenges crime but does not warn the

victim. Remember, Madame, what Machiavelli says: 'A king's tomb is never far distant from his prison.' You come of a family whose members die young, and almost invariably a violent death; two of your ancestors perished by the sword, and one by poison."

"Oh! if death were swift and painless," cried Mary, "I would welcome it as an expiation of my faults; for proud though I be at times, I am humble when I search my conscience, Melville; I am unjustly accused of being concerned in the death of Darnley, but I am justly censured for marrying Bothwell."

"Time flies, Madame! time flies," exclaimed Melville, glancing at the hour-glass on the table. "They will return, in a moment they will be here, and this time you needs must give them an answer. Listen, Madame, and make the best that can be made of your plight. You are here with a single female attendant, without friends or protectors or influence; an abdication signed under such circumstances will never seem to your subjects to have been executed of your free will, but will always be considered to have been torn from you by force, and if necessary, Madame, when the day comes to enforce your protest, then you will have two witnesses to the duress under which you acted: Mary Seaton will be one, and the other," he added, in an undertone, looking uneasily around, "will be Robert Melville."

The words were hardly out of his mouth when the steps of the two noblemen were heard on the stairs, returning before the allotted time had elapsed. A moment later the door opened, and Ruthven appeared; Lindsay's head could be seen over his shoulder.

"Well, Madame, we have returned; has your Grace made up your mind? We have come to receive your reply."

"Yes," said Lindsay, pushing by Ruthven, and approaching the table, "yes, we require a clear, precise, definite reply, without mental reservations."

"You are exacting, my Lord," said the Queen. "You would hardly have the right to expect so much at my hands, if I were on the other side of the lake, with my freedom, and surrounded by a trusty escort; but within these walls, behind these bars, in the heart of this darksome fortress, though I might say that I sign voluntarily, you would not believe me. But what matters it, you desire my signature, and I will give it you. Melville, pass me the pen."

"I hope, however," said Lord Ruthven, "that your Grace does not contemplate entering a protest at some future day against your present action, based upon the position you now occupy."

The Queen had already leaned over to write her name, her hand was already on the paper, when Lord Ruthven spoke. But the words were no sooner out of his mouth, than she rose haughtily to her feet, and let the pen fall from her hand.

"My Lord," she said, "a moment since your demand was for an abdication pure and simple, and I was on the point of signing it. But if to that abdication a postscriptum is to be added to the effect that I renounce my rights to the throne of Scotland, of my own motion, and as if I deemed myself unfit to sit thereon, why that I will never sign for the three crowns which have been stolen from me one after another."

"Beware, Madame!" shouted Lindsay, seizing the Queen's wrist in his iron gauntlet, and pressing it with all the strength of his wrath, "beware, for our patience is at an end, and we may well end by breaking what will not bend."

The Queen remained standing, and although a hot flush passed like a flame over her face, she said not a word, and made no movement, but her eyes rested with an expression of such utter contempt upon those of the brutal earl, that he blushed with shame for the lengths to which his passion had carried him, and fell back a step, releasing the Queen's hand. She raised her sleeve, and showed the bright purple marks of Lord Lindsay's iron gauntlet.

"I expected no less, my Lords," she said to the ambassadors, "and there is no further obstacle to my signing; yes, I freely abdicate the throne and crown of Scotland, and there is the proof that my will is not forced."

With these words she seized the pen, and hastily signed both documents, handed them to Lord Ruthven, and with a dignified salute walked slowly to her bedroom, accompanied by Mary Seaton.

Ruthven followed her with his eyes, and when she had disappeared:

"It matters not," he said, "she has signed, and although the method of persuasion you adopted, Lindsay, is somewhat unusual in diplomacy, it is none the less efficacious, apparently."

"Joke not, Ruthven," said Lindsay; "she is a noble creature, and had I dared, I would have fallen at her feet to crave her pardon."

"There is still time," sneered Ruthven, "and Mary, in the present plight, will not frown upon your petition. Perhaps she has resolved to appeal to the judgment of God to prove her innocence, and in that case such a champion as you might well put a different face on affairs."

"Joke not, I say, Ruthven," said Lindsay a second time, more emphatically than before; "if I were as well

convinced of her innocence as I am of her guilt, I promise you that no one should harm a hair of her head, not even the Regent himself."

"The devil! my Lord," said Ruthven, "I had not thought you so accessible to a soft voice and tearful eye. You know the story of Achilles' lance, which cured with its rust the wounds it made with its point; do like it, my Lord, do like it."

"Enough, Ruthven, enough!" Lindsay rejoined; "you are like a cuirass of Milan steel, which shines thrice as brightly as a suit of armor of Glasgow iron, but is also twice as hard. We know each other, Ruthven, so a truce to raillery. Enough, I say, enough."

With that Lord Lindsay strode from the room, followed by Ruthven and Melville, the first with head erect and an air of assumed indifference, and the other with sad face and drooping head, not even trying to conceal the painful impression made upon him by the scene just enacted.

The Queen did not leave her room until evening, when she resumed her place at the window looking upon the lake; at the usual hour she saw the light, which was thenceforth her only source of comfort and hope, twinkle brightly in the little house at Kinross. For a whole long month she had no other consolation than to see it shining there, fixed and faithful, night after night.

At last, after a month had passed by, and just as she was beginning to despair of ever seeing George Douglas again, one morning, when she opened her window, she uttered a cry of delight. Mary Seaton ran to her side, and the Queen, lacking the strength to utter a word, pointed to the little skiff at anchor in the middle of the lake; in the skiff were Little Douglas and George, engrossed in their favorite amusement of fishing. The

young man had arrived the night before, but, as everyone was accustomed to his unannounced returns, the sentinel did not even blow the horn, so that the Queen had no notice that at last she had a friend within call once more.

However, three more days passed before she saw this friend, except, as at first, upon the lake. To be sure, George never, from morning till night, left the spot whence he could see the Queen's windows, and at times the Queen herself, when she pressed her face against the bars in order to obtain a more extended view.

At last, on the morning of the fourth day, she was awakened by a great barking of dogs and blowing of horns. She at once ran to the window (for the most trivial occurrences interest a prisoner) and saw William Douglas in the act of embarking with huntsmen and a whole pack of hounds. He had laid aside for a day his duties as gaoler to enjoy a sport more in accord with his rank and birth, and was starting on a hunting excursion among the woods which cover the lower ridges of Ben Lomond, and extend to the banks of the lake.

The Queen trembled with pleasure, for she hoped that Lady Lochleven would retain her spite, and that George would take his brother's place. Her hope was not disappointed; at the usual hour, the Queen heard the steps approaching of them who were bringing her breakfast; the door opened, and she saw George Douglas come in, preceding the servants with the dishes. He barely acknowledged her presence, but he had warned her to be surprised at nothing, so she returned his distant salutation with a disdainful smile. But when the servants had discharged their duties and left the room, as usual, she exclaimed:

"At last you have returned!"

George put his finger to his lips and walked softly to the door to see that the servants had really withdrawn, and that no one of them had stayed behind to spy upon them. Having satisfied himself upon that point, he returned more at ease in his mind, and said, with a bow of deep respect:

"Yes, Madame, and I am the bearer of good news, thank heaven!"

"Oh! tell it me quickly!" cried the Queen, "for our life in this castle is a hell on earth. You know that they came hither, do you not, and that they forced me to sign an abdication?"

"Yes, Madame," Douglas replied; "but we also know that your signature was obtained by violence alone, and our devotion to your Majesty has become more absolute, if that be possible."

"But tell me, pray, what you have done?"

"The Seatons and Hamiltons, who are, as your Majesty is well aware, your most faithful adherents,"—here Mary turned with an affectionate smile to her attendant and gave her her hand—"have already mustered their troops, who are ready to move at the first signal. But, as their forces alone are not sufficiently numerous to take the field, we shall steer a straight course for Dunbarton, where the Governor is with us; the situation of that place and its strength will enable us to hold it against the Regent's troops for a sufficient time to enable the hearts which remain faithful to you to join us there."

"Yes, yes," said the Queen, "I have no fear as to what we shall do when we shall have left this place behind, but how are we to make an escape from here?"

"The solution of that question, Madame, will make it necessary for your Majesty to summon all the courage

of which you have given such frequent and convincing evidence."

"If I need naught but courage and self-possession," said the Queen, "have no fear, for neither the one nor the other will fail me."

"Here is a file," said George, handing the tool to Mary Seaton as if he thought it unworthy to touch the Queen's hands; "this evening I will bring your Majesty cords with which to make a ladder. You must cut through one of the bars of your window, which is but twenty feet from the ground. I will mount the ladder to the window to test its strength as well as to help you to descend; one of the garrison is in my pay, he will give us egress through the gate at which he is on guard, and you will be free."

"When will it be?" cried the Queen.

"We must needs wait for two things, Madame," replied Douglas; "first, until we have assembled at Kinross an escort of sufficient size to ensure your Majesty's safety; secondly, until it is Thomas Warden's turn to stand guard at an isolated gate which we can reach without being seen."

"How shall you know when that time comes? shall you remain at the castle?"

"Alas! no, Madame; at the castle I am a useless, perhaps a dangerous, friend; while on yonder shore I can serve you to good purpose."

"But how will you know when Warden's turn of duty arrives?"

"The weathercock on the northern tower, instead of turning with the wind like the others, will remain stationary."

"But how am I to know?"

"Everything is provided for in that regard also; the

light which shines every night in the little house at Kinross tells you that your friends are always on the watch; when you wish to know whether the hour of your deliverance is drawing near or is still uncertain, do you place a light in this window; the other will immediately disappear. Then place your hand against your breast and count your heart-beats; if you count twenty before the light appears again, you will know that nothing is decided; if you count only to ten, it means that the time is near at hand; if you have not time to count beyond five, your escape is appointed for the evening of the next day; if the light does not reappear at all, it is appointed for that same night. In the latter event, the hoot of an owl thrice repeated in the courtyard will be the signal; when you hear it, drop the ladder."

"Oh! Douglas," cried the Queen, "none but you could thus have foreseen and provided for everything. Thanks, a thousand times, thanks!"—and she gave him her hand to kiss.

A vivid flush overspread the young man's cheeks, but with an effort he mastered his emotion, and sternly repressed the impulse to give expression to the passion of which he had spoken to the Queen a single time, when he promised her never to speak of it again. He knelt on one knee, took the hand which Mary offered him and kissed it with such profound respect that no one could have seen in the action anything more than the homage of devotion and fidelity. He then saluted the Queen and left the room, lest a more protracted stay might arouse suspicion.

At dinner time he brought a package of cord, as he promised. It was not long enough, but when night came Mary Seaton was to let one end hang down from the window and George would attach a sufficient

additional quantity. This plan was carried out as arranged, and without accident, an hour after the hunters returned.

The next day George left the castle again.

The Queen and Mary Seaton lost no time in setting to work at their rope ladder, and in three days it was finished. The following evening the Queen, in her impatience, and rather to make sure of the vigilance of her adherents than with any hope that the time for her deliverance was at hand, placed the lamp in the window; instantly, as Douglas had said, the light in the house at Kinross disappeared. Thereupon the Queen put her hand to her heart, and counted twenty-two before the light reappeared; this signified that nothing was definitely decided on as yet.

For a week the Queen continued in this way to question the light and her heart-beats, without any change in the reply. On the ninth evening she counted ten only; at the eleventh the light appeared again.

The Queen thought that she was mistaken; she dared not believe that she had read the meaning of the signal aright, so she removed the lamp, and a short time after placed it in the window again. Her unknown correspondent at once understood that she desired a repetition of his reply; the light in the little house disappeared once more; once more Mary questioned her heart, and rapidly as it leaped, the star of promise twinkled again on the horizon before the twelfth beat; there was no further room for doubt, everything was arranged. Mary could not close her eyes that night; the patient persistence of her devoted friends moved her to shed tears of gratitude. When the day broke, the Queen questioned her companion again and again, to make sure that it was not a dream. Every sound that she heard seemed to

her to indicate that the scheme upon which her liberty depended was discovered, and when William Douglas entered her room as usual at breakfast time, she hardly dared to look at him, for fear of reading upon his features that all was lost.

In the evening the Queen again interrogated the light with the same result; nothing had changed; the beacon still bade her hope.

For five nights in succession it continued to indicate that the time was near at hand; on the sixth, the light reappeared before the Queen had counted five pulsations. She leaned heavily upon her companion; between her excessive joy and her fear, she was near fainting. Her escape was to be effected the next evening!

The Queen repeated the signal, and received the same reply, so that there could be no further doubt. Everything was ready, except the prisoner's courage; that failed her for an instant, and she would have fallen to the floor, had Mary Seaton not guided her to a chair. But after the first moment of agitation, she recovered herself and became stronger and more resolute than ever.

Until midnight she remained at the window with her eyes fixed upon that blessed light; at last Mary Seaton induced her to retire, proposing, if she could not sleep, to read aloud to her some of M. Ronsard's verses, or a chapter from the Mer des Histoires. But Mary declined to listen to any secular work at that solemn moment, and asked her to read her hours, making the proper responses to the prayers, as if she were in attendance upon a mass said by a Catholic priest. Towards daybreak she dozed fitfully, and her faithful attendant, who was dying with fatigue, at once fell asleep in her chair by the Queen's pillow.

In the morning she was awakened by a touch upon her shoulder; it was the Queen who had already risen.

"Come and look, little one," she said; "come and see what a lovely day God has given us. Oh! how beautiful is nature, and what bliss it will be to me to be free once more among yonder plains and mountains! Surely, heaven is on our side."

"Madame," Mary replied, "I would much prefer to see the weather less beautiful; it would give promise of a darker night; and remember that we must pray for darkness, not for light."

"Hearken," said the Queen; "by that token we shall see if God is really on our side; if the weather remains as it is, you are right, and He abandons us; but if the clouds gather; why, then, little one, it will be, will it not? proof positive of His protection."

Mary Seaton smiled and nodded in approbation of her mistress' superstitious suggestion. The Queen, unable to remain idle when her excitement was so great, occupied herself putting together such jewels as she had preserved, and placed them in a casket, and then laid out a black dress for the evening, to assist the darkness in concealing her flight. When these preparations were concluded she resumed her seat at the window, gazing incessantly across the lake at the house on Kinross hill, which was as tightly closed and lifeless as usual.

Her heart was so full that she welcomed William Douglas, when he arrived with the breakfast, with more amiability than usual, but it was only with great difficulty that she kept her seat throughout the meal. She succeeded in restraining herself, however, and Douglas retired without giving any sign that he had noticed her agitation.

Mary ran to the window again as soon as he left the room; she thirsted for the free air, and her eyes devoured the vast landscape which lay spread out before them, anticipating the moment when she should once more tread the heather as free as the air itself. It seemed to her that once her liberty was restored, she would never more immure herself within palace walls, but would spend her days roaming through the fields. But amidst her exuberant delight, she was seized from time to time with a strange sinking at the heart; at such moments she turned to Mary Seaton seeking new inspiration in her strength, and the maiden spoke words of encouragement, rather from a sense of duty than from conviction.

Interminable as the hours seemed to the Queen, they passed, one by one; towards afternoon, a few light clouds were floating across the sky, and the Queen joyfully pointed them out to her attendant. Mary Seaton rejoiced at their appearance, not because of the imaginary favorable augury which the Queen sought to draw from them, but because it was of the utmost importance that the sky should be overcast, so that their flight might be made easier by the darkness.

The dinner hour arrived while the prisoners were following the course of the moving masses of vapor. A half-hour of constraint and dissimulation ensued, which was the more distressing because William Douglas, doubtless to show his appreciation of the Queen's affability in the morning, felt called upon to indulge in some formal complimentary remarks, which forced her to take a more active part in the conversation than her preoccupation was inclined to permit. However, Douglas seemed not to notice her persistent absence of mind, and everything went off as at breakfast.

Once more the Queen hurried to the window as soon

as he left the room; the clouds which she had noticed some time before had grown heavier, and increased in extent, every particle of blue had disappeared and the heavens were covered with a dull gray pall. The little house at Kinross was still closed and seemed entirely deserted.

Night came, and the light shone as usual; the Queen made the customary signal, the light disappeared, and she waited in vain for it to reappear: the attempt was surely to be made that evening.

She heard eight o'clock strike, and nine, and ten. At the latter hour the sentinels were relieved, and she heard the steps of the patrol pass under her window and die away in the distance; then all was silent once more, and so another half-hour passed. Suddenly an owl hooted three times; it was the signal agreed upon with Douglas —the supreme moment had arrived.

In such an emergency as this the Queen was certain to display all her force of character; she motioned to Mary Seaton to take away the bar and attach the rope ladder, while she extinguished the light and went to her bedroom to grope for the casket containing her jewels. When she returned George Douglas was already in the room.

"All goes well, Madame," he said; "your friends await you on the other side of the lake, Thomas Warden is on duty at the postern, and God has blessed us with a dark night."

The Queen gave him her hand without speaking; George bent his knee and put her hand to his lips; it was trembling and as cold as ice.

"In heaven's name, Madame," he said, "summon all your courage and do not give way at such a time as this."

"Our Lady of Succor, be thou our helper," Mary murmured.

"Call rather upon the spirit of your royal ancestors," said George, "for what you need at this hour is not the resignation of a Christian, but the courage and resolution of a Queen."

"Oh, Douglas! Douglas!" cried Mary piteously, "a soothsayer prophesied that I should die in prison and by violence; has not the hour arrived when his prophecy is to be fulfilled?"

"It may be so," said George, "but how much better to die as a Queen should die than to live in this old castle, deprived of liberty and foully traduced."

"You are right, George," said the Queen, "but woman is a creature of impulse; forgive me. Let us go; I am ready," she added after a moment's pause.

George went at once to the window, made sure that the ladder was firmly attached, and then stepped out upon it, grasping the bar with one hand and holding out the other to the Queen. She stepped upon a stool, as brave and determined as she was timid a moment before, and had one foot upon the window sill, when suddenly the cry *Qui vive!* was raised at the foot of the tower. The Queen instinctively drew back into the room, assisted by a sharp push from George, who leaned far out himself to see who uttered the challenge, which was twice repeated, and meeting with no response was immediately followed by the flash and report of a firearm. At the same instant the sentinel posted on the tower blew his horn, and another rang a mad peal on the alarm bell, while shouts of "To arms! to arms!" and "Treason! treason!" echoed through the castle.

"Yes, treason, treason!" cried Douglas, leaping back into the room. "Yes, the villain Warden has betrayed us."

He rushed up to Mary, who was standing as cold and motionless as a statue.

"Courage, Madame, courage!" he said; "whatever happens, remember that you have one friend in the castle, Little William Douglas."

The words were hardly out of his mouth when the door opened, and William Douglas and Lady Lochleven appeared on the threshold, preceded by armed soldiers and servants with torches. The room was at once filled with people and with light.

"Do you believe me now, mother?" said Douglas, pointing to his brother, who stood in front of Mary Stuart, shielding her with his body. "Look!"

For a moment the old lady tried in vain to speak, but at last words came to her.

"Speak, George Douglas," she cried, stepping forward, "speak, and clear yourself from the charge which impugns your honor; say but these words: 'A Douglas has never betrayed his trust,' and I will believe you."

"A Douglas, I grant you, mother," William interposed; "but he is no Douglas!"

"May God grant my gray hairs the strength to endure such disgrace on the part of one of my sons, and such an insult from the other! O woman, born under a baleful star," she continued, addressing the Queen, "when will you cease to be a tool in the hands of the devil of destruction and death to all who approach you? O ancient castle of Lochleven, cursed be the hour when this enchantress crossed thy threshold!"

"Say not so, my mother, say not so," cried George; "say rather, blessed be the moment which proves that though there be Douglases who have ceased to remember what they owe to their sovereign, there are others who have never forgotten it."

"Douglas! Douglas!" murmured the Queen, "did I not tell thee?"

"And what was my reply, Madame? that it is the duty and the glory of every faithful subject of your Majesty to die for you."

"Then die," cried his brother, rushing upon his brother with uplifted sword; George leaped back, drew his own weapon, and, with a movement swift as thought and instinct with hate, stood on the defensive. But Mary Stuart instantly threw herself between them.

"Not one step farther," she said to the elder brother; "put back your sword in its scabbard, George," she added, "or make use of it to make your escape from this place against any but your brother. I still have need of your life, so look well to it."

"My life is at your service, Madame, as are my arm and my honor, and since you so command, I will preserve it for you."

With that he darted to the door with a resolute bearing which forbade any interference with his motions.

"Back!" he cried to the servants who barred his passage; "room for the young Lord of Douglas, or your blood will be on your own heads!"

"Stop him!" cried William; "seize him, dead or alive! fire on him! shoot him like a dog!"

Two or three of the soldiers, afraid to disobey, made a pretense of pursuing George. A shot or two was heard without the castle and a voice cried out that he had jumped into the lake.

"Has he escaped?" cried William.

Mary breathed freely once more, and the old lady raised her arms appealingly to heaven.

"Yes, yes," William muttered; "yes, thank heaven for your son's flight, for it brings lasting disgrace upon

our whole family; from this hour we shall all be looked upon as accessories to his treason."

"Have pity on me, William," cried Lady Lochleven, wringing her hands, "in heaven's name have pity on your mother's gray hairs! can you not see that I am dying?"

Even as she spoke every vestige of color left her cheeks, and she tottered and fell into the arms of the steward and one of the servants.

"Methinks, my Lord," said Mary Seaton, "that your mother needs attention and the Queen needs rest; do you not think that it is full time for you to withdraw?"

"Oh, yes!" William retorted, "to give you time to spin new webs and to see what new flies you can entice into them. Very well, do your worst; but you will find that it is no simple task to deceive William Douglas. Play your game and I will play mine. Leave the room," he added, turning to the servants, "and do you, mother, come with me."

The servants and soldiers obeyed, and Douglas went out last, supporting Lady Lochleven. The Queen heard the grinding of the lock as the door closed behind them.

As soon as Mary was alone and certain that she could neither be seen nor heard, all her courage left her; she threw herself into a chair and sobbed as if her heart would break.

Indeed, she had needed all the strength she could muster to carry her through the ordeal, and naught but the presence of her enemies had made it possible for her. As soon as she was relieved of their presence, the horror of her situation impressed itself upon her mind to the exclusion of every other thought. Dethroned and a captive in that impregnable fortress, with no friend

save a mere child, whom she had hardly noticed, but who was the last and only connecting link between her past hope and her hopes for the future,—what remained to Queen Mary Stuart of her two thrones and her two-fold power? Her name, nothing more; her name, with which, were she at liberty, she might, doubtless, have shaken Scotland to its foundations, but which would gradually fade from the hearts of her partisans and would perhaps, even during her lifetime, be enveloped in oblivion, as in a shroud. Such a thought was unendurable to so proud a nature as Mary Stuart's, and to a physical organization which, like that of a flower, needed abundance of light and air and sunshine.

Happily that one of the four Marys whom she loved the best was still with her, and she, with never-failing tact and affection, hastened to comfort and encourage her. But it was no easy task at this time, and the Queen replied only with sobs and tears to her loving attentions and hopeful words. But suddenly she happened to glance through the window near which she had moved her mistress' chair.

"The light, Madame!" she cried; "the light!"

As she spoke she raised the Queen in her arms and pointed to the beacon, the never-failing emblem of hope, which shone through the darkness from the little house on the hill at Kinross. There was no possibility of mistake; not a star was to be seen.

"To Thee, O Lord, I render thanks," said the Queen, falling on her knees and raising her clasped hands to heaven in deep gratitude; "Douglas is safe and my friends are still watching."

After a fervent prayer, which restored her strength in some measure, she returned to her bedroom, and, worn out by the diverse emotions which had succeeded each

other so rapidly, fell into a restless, disturbed slumber, while the indefatigable Mary Seaton watched by her pillow until daylight.

As William Douglas had implied the Queen was undeniably a prisoner from that day forth, and she was not allowed to walk in the garden except under surveillance by two soldiers. The constraint of this arrangement was so irksome to her that she preferred to abandon that source of distraction, which, under such circumstances, became downright torture. So she shut herself up in her apartments, experiencing a certain proud and bitter enjoyment in the very extent of her misery.

A week after the events we have described, as nine o'clock in the evening was striking on the castle bell, and the Queen and Mary Seaton were sitting at a table, engaged in needle-work, a stone was thrown from the courtyard between the bars of the window, breaking a pane of glass, and fell on the floor of the room. The Queen's first thought was that it was an accident or an insult; but Mary Seaton, upon looking at the stone, saw that a paper was wrapped about it, and she at once picked it up. The paper proved to be a letter from George Douglas, in these words:

"You ordered me to live, Madame, and I obeyed; your Majesty has seen, by the light at Kinross, that your devoted servants are still watching over you. The soldiers, however, who were assembled to assist your escape on that fatal night, dispersed at daybreak to avoid arousing suspicion, and will not reassemble until another attempt makes their presence necessary. But alas! it would be fatal to you to make the attempt at this moment, when your Majesty's keepers are on their guard. Let them take what precautions they will, Madame; let them fall asleep in their fancied

security, while we, in our devotion are ever watching. Patience and courage!"

"Brave and loyal heart!" cried Mary, "more steadfast in his devotion in our adversity than others in our most prosperous days! Yes, I will have patience and courage, and so long as that light continues to shine I will continue to hope for liberty."

This letter restored all of the Queen's former courage. She had in Little Douglas a medium of communication with George, for the stone could have been thrown by no one but him. She lost no time in writing George a letter wherein she bade him convey her gratitude to all the nobles who signed the protest, and beg them, in the name of the faith they had sworn to her, not to let their ardor in her cause grow cool, promising on her own part to await the result with the patience and courage which they enjoined upon her.

She was not mistaken as to Little Douglas; the next morning, as she was sitting at her window, he came to the foot of the tower, and, without looking up, set to work directly beneath her fashioning a gin to snare birds. The Queen looked to see if she was observed, and having made sure that that part of the court was deserted let the stone fall with the letter wrapped around it. At first she feared that she had made a serious mistake, for the child did not even turn at the sound; and not until a moment or two thereafter, the Queen, meanwhile, suffering tortures of anxiety, did he put his hand on the stone, with perfect coolness of manner, and as if he were seeking something else. He put it in his pocket in a leisurely way, without raising his head, or making any sign of intelligence, and finished the task he had begun with the utmost sang-froid, indicating by that alone how great confidence might be placed in him.

That incident caused hope to spring anew in the Queen's breast; but days and weeks and months rolled on and brought no change in the situation. Winter arrived; the prisoner saw the snow spread its mantle of white over the plains and mountains, and, if she could but have passed the gate, the frozen lake offered her a solid pathway to the shore. In all that time no letter brought her the comforting intelligence that her deliverance still engrossed their thoughts, but every evening the light announced that some friend was watching.

In due time nature awoke from her deathlike sleep, and now and then a stray sunbeam pierced the murky clouds which overhang Scotland from the beginning to the end of winter. The snow melted, the icy crust on the lake disappeared, the trees put forth their buds, and woods and fields were green and beautiful once more. Everything, animate and inanimate, came forth from its prison at the glad approach of spring. It was a bitter sorrow for Mary that for her alone winter was never-ending.

One evening she fancied that the movements of the light indicated that something new was toward. She had so often questioned the faint, twinkling star, and had so often counted more than twenty heart-beats, that for a long time, to avoid the agony of disappointment, she had not made the signal. She determined, however, to make one more trial, and almost hopelessly she placed the light in the window. The other light instantly disappeared, and was replaced as her heart beat for the eleventh time. At the same moment, by a strange coincidence, a stone flew threw the window, and fell at Mary Seaton's feet. It was, like the first, wrapped in a letter from George, which the Queen took from her companion's hands and read: "The moment is at hand," so ran

the letter, "your friends are assembled; summon all your courage. To-morrow, at eleven o'clock, drop a cord from your window, and draw up the package which will be attached to it."

Several pieces of cord left over after making the ladder which the guards carried away on the evening of the abortive attempt at escape were still in the Queen's room. The next evening, at the hour named in the letter, the prisoners removed the lamp to the bedroom, so that their movements might not be detected by its light, and Mary Seaton dropped the cord from the window. A moment later she could feel that something was being attached to it. She drew it up, and found that the package was too large to be taken through the bars. The Queen came to her assistance, and they untied the package, and found that the articles it contained would easily come through, one by one. They took them all into the bedroom, and having locked themselves in began their inventory. The contents of the package proved to be two complete suits of the Douglas livery. The Queen could make nothing of it at first, but finally she discovered a letter fastened to the collar of one of the doublets. In her eagerness to learn the answer to the enigma, she tore it open, and read as follows:

"Sheer audacity alone will enable your Majesty to regain your liberty; we therefore pray your Majesty to read this letter, and if you deign to adopt the suggestions contained therein, to follow them minutely.

"The keys of the castle never leave the old steward's belt during the day; when the curfew has rung, and he has made his last round to make sure that all the doors and gates are secured, he hands them to William Douglas, who attaches them to his sword belt if he passes the night on guard, and puts them under his pillow if he

retires. For five months past, Little Douglas, who is allowed to work at the armorer's forge in the castle without remark, has been occupied in fashioning a set of keys, sufficiently like the genuine ones to deceive William if the substitution can once be effected. Yesterday he finished the last one.

"At the first favorable opportunity—and your Majesty will know when it has occurred by questioning the light every evening without fail—Little Douglas will substitute the false keys for the genuine ones, will enter your Majesty's chamber, where he will find you and Miss Seaton dressed in your male costumes, and will guide you, by the road which seems to present the best chance of escape out of the castle to the lake, where a boat will await you.

"Until that time, your Majesty and Miss Seaton must wear these male costumes every evening from nine o'clock till midnight, as well to accustom yourselves to them, as to give them the appearance of having been worn. It is possible, too, that your young guide may come for you unexpectedly, having had no opportunity to notify you; and it is of course of the utmost importance that he should find you ready.

"The clothes should be nearly a perfect fit for your Majesty and your attendant, as Miss Mary Fleming and Miss Mary Livingston, who are of much the same figure, were measured for them.

"We cannot impress too strongly upon your Majesty the necessity of calling to your aid, at this supreme crisis, the marvelous courage and presence of mind which you have displayed so frequently at other moments of supreme importance."

The prisoners were dumfounded at the boldness of the plan; and at first they gazed at each other in consterna-

tion, for it seemed to them that success was out of the question. Nevertheless, they tried on their disguises, and, as George had prophesied, both of them were fitted as well as if the garments had been made for them.

Every evening the Queen obeyed the injunctions of the letter by questioning the light, and for a whole tedious month she and Mary Seaton never failed to don their male habits, although the light had no announcement to make; in this way they both became so accustomed to them that they were as much at home in them as in those more suited to their sex.

On the 2d of May, 1568, the Queen was awakened by a blast on the horn; being anxious to know what it portended, she hastily donned a morning dress, and ran to the window, where she was soon joined by Mary Seaton. A considerable body of horsemen were standing on the shore of the lake, displaying the Douglas banner, and three boats were rowing ashore together to fetch them.

This occurrence was well calculated to alarm the Queen; the least change in the regular routine of the castle was to be dreaded at the present juncture, for it might overturn all their carefully-laid plans. Her apprehension increased as the boats approached, and she spied in the largest one Lord Douglas, the husband of the Lady of Lochleven, and father of William and George. The old nobleman, who was warden in the marches in the north, had come to visit his old domain, which he had not seen for three years.

It was a great event at Lochleven Castle. A few moments after the arrival of the boats Mary heard the step of the old steward on the staircase. He came to inform the Queen of his master's arrival; and as the return of the lord of the castle was to be a holiday to all its inhabitants, he solicited her presence at the

dinner-party which was to form part of the celebration. The Queen refused, perhaps because her instinct told her to do so, perhaps because the invitation was repugnant to her.

All day long the bell and the horn were being sounded. Lord Douglas, like a true feudal chieftain, traveled with a princely retinue. New faces of soldiers and servants were constantly passing back and forth under the Queen's windows, footmen and grooms all wearing a livery like that which the Queen and Mary Seaton had received.

Mary waited with feverish impatience for the night to come. The night before she had questioned the light, and it had replied as usual, by reappearing at the eleventh or twelfth heart-beat, that the moment was near at hand; but she was terribly alarmed lest the arrival of Lord Douglas had deranged their plans, so that the light when next it appeared would announce a postponement. And so, the instant it was lighted, she placed her own in the window; the other immediately disappeared, and Mary, in an agony of suspense, began to count. Her agitation increased tenfold when she had counted beyond fifteen. She ceased to count then, and stood in utter discouragement, gazing mechanically at the spot where the light had been. What was her amazement when it failed to reappear at all, and after half an hour had elapsed, all was still dark! She then repeated the signal, but obtained no response; the escape was certainly to be attempted that very evening.

They had so little expectation of anything of the sort for that evening, that they had neglected to dress themselves in their masculine costumes; they rushed into the Queen's bed-room, barricaded the door, and began to change their clothes. Their hurried toilette was

barely completed when they heard a key turn in the lock, and they at once extinguished their lamp. Soft steps approached; the two women leaned upon each other, for they were both near fainting with excitement. There was a gentle knocking at the door. The Queen asked who was there, and the boy's voice replied with the first lines of the old ballad:

Douglas, Douglas,
Tender and true.

She at once opened the door, for it was the countersign agreed upon with George Douglas.

The boy had no light, but he put out his hand until it touched the Queen's. By the faint light of the stars she saw him kneel and felt his lips touch her fingers.

"Is your Majesty ready to follow me?" he asked in a whisper, as he stood erect once more.

"Yes, my child," the Queen replied; "but is it to be this evening?"

"With your Majesty's permission, yes."

"Everything is ready?"

"Everything."

"What have we to do?"

"Follow me wherever I go."

"O merciful God!" cried Mary, "have pity upon us!"

She repeated a short prayer beneath her breath, while Mary Seaton procured the casket which contained her jewels.

"Now I am ready," she said; "and you, little one?"

"I am ready also," replied her attendant.

"Come then," said Little Douglas.

The prisoners followed him, the Queen walking first. Their youthful conductor carefully closed the door, so

that any passing guard might notice nothing, and then began to descend the spiral staircase. When they were half-way down, they heard the echoes from the banquet hall, a mixture of loud laughter, the confused hum of voices and the clinking of glasses. The Queen laid her hand upon her young guide's shoulder.

"Whither are you leading us?" she asked in alarm.

"Out of the castle," he replied.

"But must we pass through the great hall?"

"We must, indeed, and that was George's reason for providing the liveries. Among the servants, all dressed in the same livery, no one will recognize you."

"Oh! my God! my God!" murmured the Queen, leaning against the wall for support.

"Courage, Madame," whispered Mary Seaton in her ear, "or we are lost."

"You say well," the Queen replied, "let us go on."

They continued down the stairs, still following their guide.

At the foot of the stairs he stopped, and handed the Queen an earthen jar filled with wine.

"Put this jar on your right shoulder, Madame," he said; "it will conceal your face from the guests, and if you are carrying something your Majesty will be the less likely to arouse suspicion. Do you, Miss Mary, give me the casket, and put this basket of bread on your head. There, that is well; do you feel able to go on?"

"Yes," said the Queen.

"Yes," said Mary Seaton.

"Follow me then."

A few steps farther on, they found themselves in a sort of anteroom adjoining the large hall; there the noise was very perceptible. Several servants were in the apartment, occupied in various ways. Not one of

them seemed to notice them and the Queen felt somewhat reassured. At all events it was too late to retreat as Little Douglas was entering the banquet hall.

The guests, seated on both sides of a long table, graded according to the rank of those who sat at it, had reached the dessert stage, that is to say the most convivial moment of the whole feast. But the hall was so vast that the lamps and candles by which it was lighted, numerous as they were, left the two sides, where fifteen or twenty servants were going and coming, in a sort of half darkness most favorable to the design of the the fugitives.

The Queen and her companion passed among the servants, who were too much occupied to observe them, and without once stopping, without losing courage, without looking back, they traversed the entire length of the hall, and passed through the door at the other end into an anteroom similar to the one they crossed before entering the hall. There the Queen set down her jar and Mary Seaton her basket and, still under the child's guidance, they passed through a corridor, at the end of which they found themselves in the courtyard. A patrol was passing at the moment, but paid no attention to them.

The child led the way to the garden, still followed by the two women. At that point he was compelled to spend much time in finding the right key to open the gate; it was a moment of indescribable agony. At last the key turned in the lock and the gate swung back; the Queen and her attendant rushed into the garden, while their guide secured the gate behind them.

Two-thirds of the way across the garden, the little fellow put out his hand and motioned to them to stop; he laid the casket and the keys on the ground, put his

hands to his mouth and thrice imitated the cry of the owl with such perfection that it was incredible that the sounds should have proceeded from the mouth of a human being. Then he picked up the casket and the keys and walked on tiptoe, listening intently. When they were within a short distance of the wall they halted again and, after a moment of anxious suspense, they heard a groan and a noise that sounded like a body falling. A second or two later the signal was answered.

"It is done," the boy coolly remarked; "now let us go."

"What is it that is done," the Queen asked, "and what was the groan we heard?"

"There was a sentinel at the gate which opens on the lake, but he is no longer there."

The Queen felt her blood run cold in her veins, for she understood it all; some poor wretch had lost his life because of her. She leaned falteringly upon Mary Seaton, who was, herself, well-nigh at the end of her strength. Meanwhile Little William was trying his keys; the second one opened the gate.

"The Queen?" whispered a man who was waiting outside the wall.

"She is behind me," the boy answered.

George Douglas, for it was he, darted into the garden and, taking the Queen's arm in one hand and Mary Seaton's in the other, he hurried them to the lake shore. As she passed through the gate, Mary Stuart could not forbear to glance uneasily to one side and the other, and she thought she could see a shapeless mass lying at the foot of the wall. A shudder ran through her every limb.

"Do not pity him," said George, in an undertone, "for it is God's justice. It is the infamous villain Warden, who betrayed us."

"Alas!" said the Queen, "guilty though he may have been, he died none the less because of me."

"When your welfare is at stake, Madame, can we haggle over a drop or two of that ignoble blood? But hush! This way, William, this way; let us keep along in the shadow of the wall. The boat is within twenty feet and we are safe."

With that he drew the fugitives along more swiftly than before, and all four reached the water's edge without being discovered. There a small boat was lying, as Douglas said, and, as they saw the fugitives coming, four oarsmen who were lying in the bottom rose to their feet, and one of them leaped ashore and drew the little craft up so that the Queen and her companion could step aboard. Douglas seated them at the bow, the boy took his place at the tiller, and George, with his foot on shore, gave a vigorous push, which sent the boat well out into the lake.

"Now," said he, "we are out of danger, for as well might they chase a tern on Solway Firth as try to overtake us. Row, boys, row; it matters little whether they hear us now; what we need is speed, speed."

"Who goes there?" a voice cried from the top of the tower.

"Boat there! boat," cried the sentinel. "Treason! treason! to arms!" he shouted when he saw that the rowers did not relax their efforts.

An instant later there was a flash, followed by a report, and a bullet whistled over their heads. The Queen gave a smothered shriek, although she was in no danger, for George had taken his position directly in front of her, and shielded her completely with his body.

The alarm bell was now ringing madly and lights

were seen moving swiftly about from window to window throughout the castle.

"Courage, boys," said Douglas, "and row as if your life depended on every stroke of the oars, for the skiff will be on our track within five minutes."

"They won't find it so easy as you think, George," said Little Douglas, "for I locked all the doors behind me, and it will be a long while before the keys I left will unlock them. These," he added, indicating the bunch he had so cleverly gained possession of, "I will donate to Kelpie, the genius of the lake, and appoint him porter of Lochleven Castle."

The report of a small piece of artillery replied to the little fellow's pleasantry, but the night was so dark that it was impossible to aim accurately at so great a distance and the missile passed harmlessly by fifty feet away. Douglas thereupon drew a pistol from his belt and, with a warning word to the fugitives, discharged it in the air, not to make an absurd display of bravado by way of reply to the cannonade from the castle, but to inform a party of her faithful friends who were waiting on the shore that the Queen was safe. Shouts of joy and welcome at once arose from the bank, regardless of the fact that Kinross village was but a short distance away, and the youthful helmsman steered in the direction of the voices, and ran the boat ashore. Douglas offered his hand to the Queen, who sprang lightly out upon the bank, where she fell on her knees and, first of all, rendered thanks to God for her fortunate escape.

When she arose she found herself in the midst of her most trusted adherents, Hamilton, Herries and Seaton, Mary's father. Half mad with joy, Mary held out her hands to them, stammering out her thanks in broken words, which were more expressive of her ecstasy and

her deep gratitude than the most eloquent periods could have been. Suddenly she turned her head and saw George Douglas standing gloomily apart. Instantly she went to him and took his hand.

"My Lords," she said, leading George forward and pointing to Little Douglas, "behold my deliverers, to whom, so long as I live, I shall owe a debt of gratitude which I can never hope to repay."

"Madame," Douglas replied, "each of us has done simply what he had to do, and he who incurred the most risk is the most to be envied. But if your Majesty is well-advised, you will waste no time in useless words."

"Douglas is right," said Seaton; "to horse, to horse!"

Four couriers at once galloped off in different directions to make known to the Queen's partisans her fortunate escape. With her old-time grace she sprang upon the back of a horse which was led forward for her, and the little band, consisting of a score of persons, and acting as escort to the destiny of Scotland, made a detour to avoid the village of Kinross, which was sure to have been aroused by the firing from the fortress, and rode rapidly away toward Seaton's castle, where a sufficient garrison was assembled to protect the Queen from a sudden attack.

She kept the saddle all night, Douglas riding on one side and Lord Seaton on the other, and at daybreak halted before the gate of the castle of Niddry, in Western Lothian, belonging to Lord Seaton. Douglas hastily alighted to offer his hand to the Queen, but Lord Seaton claimed his privilege as host; Mary consoled Douglas with a glance and entered the fortress.

"Madame," said Lord Seaton, escorting her to the apartment which had been nine months ready and waiting for her coming, "Your Majesty must be in urgent

need of repose, after the excitement and fatigue you have experienced since yesterday morning. Sleep peacefully, I beg, and be alarmed at nothing. The noise you may hear will be caused by a re-enforcement we are expecting. As to our enemies, your Majesty has nothing to fear from them while you are under a Seaton's roof."

The Queen thanked her rescuers once more, gave Douglas her hand to kiss for the last time, kissed Little Douglas on the forehead, and appointed him her favorite page. Then she withdrew to her bed-room, attended by Mary Seaton, who claimed the exclusive privilege of continuing to perform the duties which she had performed for her royal mistress during their eleven months of captivity.

When she reopened her eyes, Mary Stuart thought for a moment that she had been dreaming one of those blissful dreams which are so agonizing to a prisoner when he awakes to find the bolts still in place on his door, and the bars at his window. She could not believe her eyes, and ran half-naked to the window. The court-yard was filled with soldiers, all friends, who had flocked to her standard immediately upon learning of her escape. She recognized the banners of her faithful servants, the Seatons, Arbroaths, Herries and Hamiltons, and she was no sooner spied at the window than all those banners were lowered before her, and on all sides arose shouts of:

"Long live Mary of Scotland! long live our Queen!"

Regardless of her negligé attire, she bowed and smiled with her eyes brimming with tears; but the tears were tears of joy. Suddenly she noticed that she was very incompletely dressed, and she hastily retreated from the window, blushing with confusion and shame that she had allowed her emotion to carry her to such a point of

self-forgetfulness. Thereupon she was momentarily assailed by fears which were grave indeed for a woman. She had made her escape from Lochleven in masculine garb, and had had no time to take any clothes more suited to her sex, even if it had been practicable so to encumber her flight. Of course she could not continue to dress like a groom, so she imparted her distress to Mary Seaton, who replied by throwing open the wardrobe in the Queen's apartment. It was supplied, not only with dresses which were made by Mary Fleming's measure, but with every essential of a woman's toilette. The Queen was overwhelmed with astonishment; it seemed as if she had fallen among fairies.

"Little one," she said, looking over the dresses, the materials of which were selected with exquisite taste, "I knew your father to be a gallant and loyal knight, but not that he was so learned in matters pertaining to the toilette. We will make him secretary of our wardrobe."

"Ah! Madame," the maiden replied with a smile, "you are mistaken. My father looked to the polishing of every cuirass, the sharpening of every sword, and the unfurling of every banner; but, although he is only too ready to die for your Majesty, he would never have thought of offering you anything more than his roof to rest beneath, and his cloak to cover you. No: it was Douglas, who foresaw and prepared everything—everything, even to Rosabelle, your Majesty's favorite hackney, who is in the stable, impatiently awaiting the moment when your Majesty will make her triumphal entry into Edinburgh upon her back."

"But how did he succeed in getting her for me? I had been led to believe that in the division of my spoils, Rosabelle fell to the fair Alice, my brother's favorite sultana."

"And so she did, and as her value was well-known she was kept under lock and key, and guarded by an army of grooms. But Douglas is a miracle-worker, and Rosabelle, as I said, awaits your Majesty."

"Noble Douglas!" murmured the Queen with tears in her eyes. "And yet," she added, as if speaking to herself, "his is a devotion for which no recompense is possible. The others can be made content with titles, places, or wealth; but what are such things to Douglas?"

"Go to, Madame," said Mary Seaton; "God is wont to assume the obligations of kings, and he will give Douglas his due reward. I beg your Majesty to remember now that dinner is served and awaiting your coming. I trust," she added with a smile, "that you will not put upon my father the affront you put upon Lord Douglas yesterday, by refusing to join in the festivities to celebrate a safe return."

"And well it was that I did so," said Mary, "But a truce to gloomy thoughts, little one; we will consider, when we are really Queen once more, what we can do for Douglas,"

She made her toilette, and went down to the great hall, where those of the principal nobles of her party who had as yet arrived at the rendezvous were awaiting her. Her advent was greeted with tumultuous enthusiasm, and she took her place at table with Lord Seaton at her right, Douglas at her left, and Little William behind her chair, exercising his new functions of page.

The next morning the Queen was awakened by the sound of trumpets and horns. It had been agreed the night before that they should start that day for Hamilton, where they expected to find further levies. The Queen donned a bewitching Amazonian costume, and

appeared among her protectors, mounted on Rosabelle. Joyful shouts arose on all sides; every one admired and praised her beauty and grace and spirit. Mary Stuart was herself again, and she felt her hold tighten upon the power of fascination which she had always exerted over all who came near her. Every soul was in high good humor, and perhaps the happiest of all was Little Douglas, who for the first time in his life wore a beautiful costume, and rode a beautiful horse.

Two or three thousand men awaited the Queen at Hamilton, where she arrived the same evening; and during the night following her force was increased to six thousand. On May 2d she was a prisoner, with no friend in her prison save a young boy, and no other means of communication with her adherents than the flickering, uncertain light of a lamp; and three days later she was not free simply, but at the head of a powerful confederation, which numbered among its leaders nine earls, eight barons, nine bishops, and a great number of knights and gentlemen among the most renowned in Scotland for gallantry and chivalrous devotion.

The advice of the most discreet of those who were in attendance upon the Queen was to shut herself up in the fortress of Dunbarton, which was substantially impregnable, and thus give all her partisans, however far away and scattered they might be, time to join her standard. In accordance with that advice, the command of the troops who were to escort the Queen to Dunbarton was entrusted to the Earl of Argyle, and on the 11th of May she set out with an army of about ten thousand men.

Murray was at Glasgow when he learned of his sister's escape; it was a strong place, so he determined to remain

there, and summoned the bravest and most devoted of his faction to join him. Kirkaldy of Grange, Morton, Lindsay of the Byres, Lord Lochleven and William Douglas answered his call, and six thousand of the best troops of the kingdom were under arms there, while Lord Ruthven was making levies in Berwick and Angus, with which he was to join them.

On May 13th at daybreak Morton occupied the village of Langside, through which it was necessary for Mary to pass on her way to Dunbarton. Word was brought to the Queen when the armies were about three leagues apart. Her first impulse was to try to avoid a battle, for she remembered her last experience at Carberry Hill which resulted in her being separated from Bothwell and haled back to Edinburgh. She gave voice to her opinion, and was supported by George Douglas, who retained his position at her side, clad in a suit of black armor, without device.

"Avoid a battle!" cried Lord Seaton, not daring to reply to his sovereign, but addressing Douglas, as if the opinion had been his originally; "we might perhaps do so if we were one against ten, but most assuredly not, when we are three against two. You hold strange language, young sir," he continued in a slightly scornful tone, "and you seem to forget that you are a Douglas, and that you are addressing a Seaton."

"My Lord," George rejoined calmly, "if we were risking no lives save those of Seatons and Douglases, you would find me, I trust, as well disposed as yourself to do battle, though we were one against ten, or three against two; but at this moment we are responsible for an existence which is more precious to Scotland than those of all the Seatons and all the Douglases. My opinion still is, therefore, that we should avoid a battle."

"Onset! onset!" cried all the leaders with one voice.

"Do you hear, Madame?" said Lord Seaton to Mary; "to decide otherwise in the face of such unanimity would be unwise, I believe. There is an old Scotch proverb, Madame, which says that courage is the greatest prudence."

"But you heard it said, did you not," rejoined the Queen, "that the Regent occupies a strong position?"

"The greyhound pursues the hare over hill as well as over plain," was Seaton's reply; "however strong his position we will dislodge him."

"Let it be as you wish, my Lords. It shall not be said that Mary Stuart ordered the sword which her defenders drew in her cause to be sheathed."

She turned to Douglas.

"George," she said, "select a body-guard of twenty men, and take command of it; you must not leave my side."

George bowed his acquiescence, selected twenty of the flower of the army, placed the Queen in the centre of them, and took his own place at their head. The march was then resumed, and in about two hours the vanguard came in sight of the enemy. Thereupon they halted and the rest of the army caught them up.

The Queen's forces were then abreast of the city of Glasgow. The higher land directly in front of them was occupied by a considerable force flying the royal standard of Scotland, which was displayed by the opposing army as well. On the other hand, and upon the opposite slope of the hill, lay the village of Langside, surrounded by gardens. The road which led thither, and which followed all the inequalities of the soil, was so narrow at one spot that there was barely room for two men to pass; farther on it plunged into a ravine,

and when it emerged on the other side it separated into two, one of which ran up the hill to Langside, and the other went on to Glasgow.

When the Earl of Argyle saw how the land lay he realized the importance of gaining possession of the village; he ordered Lord Seaton to hasten thither, and try to anticipate the enemy, who had doubtless made the same discovery as the leader of the royal army, for a considerable body of cavalry was in motion at that moment.

Lord Seaton at once collected his men; but while they were taking their places around his banner, Lord Arbroath drew his sword and rode up to the Earl of Argyle.

"My Lord," he said, "you wrong me by sending Lord Seaton to seize that position; that honor belongs to me as commander of the vanguard. Give me leave to assert my right, and claim the honor."

"The order to seize the post was given to me, and, by heaven, I will execute it!" cried Seaton.

"It may be so," retorted Arbroath, "but not in advance of me!"

"In advance of you and of all the Hamiltons on earth," shouted Seaton, galloping off upon the narrow road. "St. Bennet! forward!"

"Forward, my gallants!" cried Arbroath, darting away in the same direction; "forward, my men-at-arms! God and the Queen!"

Both troops followed their chieftains in disorderly fashion, and crowded into the narrow pass, where, as we have said, it was difficult for two men to walk abreast. There was a terrible shock and crush, and the battle began between friends, who should have shown a united front against the common foe. At last they crowded

through the pass, leaving behind the bodies of several who were stifled in the crush or killed by their companions and disappeared in the ravine.

But Seaton and Arbroath had lost many precious moments in this senseless struggle, and the detachment sent by Murray arrived first at the village, which it was necessary now not to seize simply, but to capture.

Argyle saw that the principal struggle of the day must take place at that point, and becoming more and more impressed with the strategical importance of the village, he placed himself at the head of his main body, ordering a rear guard of two thousand men to hold their present position and await further orders before joining in the battle. But the officer to whom he entrusted the command of that force either misunderstood his orders or was desirous of distinguishing himself in the Queen's eyes; for Argyle had no sooner disappeared in the ravine, at the farther extremity of which the battle was already on between Kirkaldy of Grange and Morton on one side, and Arbroath and Seaton on the other, than he, too, set off at full speed, disregarding the Queen's commands, and left her with no other guard than the escort of twenty men whom Douglas had chosen.

Douglas heaved a sigh, which the Queen overheard.

"Alas!" she said, "I am no soldier; but, methinks, the battle is but ill begun."

"What would you?" Douglas rejoined; "from the first man to the last we are the victims of a sort of vertigo, and all those men are acting like fools or children."

"Victory! victory!" the Queen suddenly exclaimed. "See, the enemy are retreating. I saw the banners of Seaton and Arbroath waving among the first houses in

the village. Oh, my gallant nobles!" she cried, clapping her hands; "Victory! victory!"

But her enthusiasm was as suddenly quenched as she saw a hostile force advancing to attack the victors in flank.

"That is nothing, that's nothing," said Douglas; "so long as there are none but cavalry, there is little to fear; and besides, the Earl of Argyle will come up in time to support them."

"George!" said his young kinsman.

"Well?"

"Look!" said the child, pointing to the enemy, who were galloping toward the village.

"What is it?"

"Each horseman has an arquebusier *en croupe*, so that they are really twice as numerous as they seem."

"By heaven! it is true; the boy has sharp eyes. Let some one ride amain and warn the Earl of Argyle."

"I will go! I!" cried the boy. "I saw them first, and it is my right to carry the warning."

"Go then, my boy," said Douglas, "and God have you in his keeping!"

The child rode away like a flash, not hearing, or feigning not to hear, the Queen call him back. They watched him through the narrow pass, and saw him plunge into the ravine, just as Argyle emerged from the other end to reinforce Seaton and Arbroath. Meanwhile the infantry of the detachment of the enemy had alighted and scattered along the side of the ravine, where horses could not go.

"William will arrive too late," cried Douglas; "even should he arrive in time the warning will be useless. O fools, fools that we are! Thus have we always lost our battles!"

"Pray, is the battle lost?" Mary asked with colorless cheeks.

"No, Madame, no," cried Douglas, "not yet, thank God! but we made a bad beginning through being overhasty."

"And what of William?" said Mary.

"He is now having his first taste of war, for, unless I am much mistaken, he ought now to be at the very spot where those arquebusiers are firing so rapidly."

"Poor child!" said the Queen, "I shall never forgive myself if aught befall him."

"Alas! Madame," replied Douglas, "I greatly fear that his first battle is destined to be his last, and that it is all over with him, for I am much deceived if this is not his horse returning without a rider."

"O my God! my God!" said the Queen, raising her arms to heaven, while the tears streamed from her eyes; "is it written that I bring death to all who love me?"

George was not in error; it was William's horse, riderless and covered with blood.

"Madame," said Douglas, "we are badly placed here; "let us ride to the top of yonder eminence, to Crookstane Castle; from there we can see the whole field of battle."

"No, not there! not there!" almost shrieked the Queen; "in that castle I passed the first days of my honeymoon with Darnley; it would bring me ill-fortune."

"Very well; under yonder yew, then," said George, pointing to another hill near the first; "it is important that we should lose no detail of the engagement. Your Majesty's fate may, perhaps, depend on an ill-judged manœuvre or a lost opportunity."

"Take me there," said the Queen; "for I can no

longer see my way. Every report of that terrible artillery echoes to the very bottom of my heart."

Although the eminence which they ascended was so situated as to command a view of the whole field of battle, the constant discharge of artillery and the sharp fusillade produced so dense a cloud of smoke that it was impossible to distinguish aught save shapeless masses struggling amid the homicidal vapor. At last, when the desperate conflict had lasted nearly an hour, they saw fleeing men emerge from the sea of smoke, and scatter in all directions, pursued by the victors. But at that distance it was impossible to distinguish who had won or lost the day, nor did the standards contribute to the solution of the difficulty, as they were identical on both sides, and all bore the arms of Scotland.

Suddenly they saw the last of the reserve of Murray's army rushing down the hill from the direction of Glasgow to join in the affray, but their purpose might as well be to support the retreat of their friends as to put the finishing touch to the defeat of their enemies. But it was not long before all doubt was removed; for the reserve charged the fugitives and caused renewed confusion among them.

The Queen's army was defeated.

Just as they became convinced that this was so, three or four horsemen rode out of the ravine on the side nearest them, spurring rapidly toward them. Douglas saw at a glance that they were enemies.

"Fly, Madame!" he cried; "fly without losing a second, for they will soon be followed by others. Make all the speed you can while I hold them in check. And do you," he added, turning to the escort, "sell your lives as dearly as possible, and die to the last man rather than let your Queen be taken."

"George! George!" cried the Queen, standing as if nailed to her place.

But George had already ridden away at full speed, and, as he was mounted on a superb horse, he traversed the intervening space with the rapidity of lightning and reached the narrow pass before his adversaries. There he stopped, placed his lance in rest, and coolly awaited the onset, one man against five.

The Queen could not make up her mind to fly, but remained, as if turned to stone, on the same spot, with her eyes fixed on the combat which was taking place within five hundred yards of her. Suddenly she noticed that one of George's opponents bore in the centre of his shield a bleeding heart, which was the Douglas crest.

"Douglas against Douglas; brother against brother!" she murmured; "it needed but this."

"Madame! Madame!" cried the soldiers of her escort, "there is not an instant to lose; the young Lord of Douglas cannot long hold head alone against five; let us fly!"

Two of them seized the Queen's rein on either side and set off at a gallop, just as George, after striking down two of his adversaries and wounding a third, was himself laid in the dust, with his heart pierced by a lance-head.

The Queen groaned aloud when she saw him fall; then, as if he alone had detained her and she took no further interest in anything now that he was slain, she gave Rosabelle the rein, and, as she and her escort were all splendidly mounted, the battlefield was soon left far behind.

She rode sixty miles without rest, and without ceasing to weep and sigh. After riding through Renfrewshire and Ayrshire, she reached the Abbey of Dundrennan,

in Galloway, and commanded a halt there, being certain that she was out of danger, for a time at least.

The prior came to the convent gate and received her with due respect.

"I bring you desolation and woe, father," said Mary as she alighted from her horse.

"They are welcome," replied the prior, "as they come in the train of duty."

The Queen commended Rosabelle to one of the men-at-arms who accompanied her, and entered the convent leaning upon Mary Seaton, who had not left her for a moment, and Lord Herries, who had joined her on the road.

Lord Herries did not attempt to conceal from her the gravity of her position. The battle had resulted in total defeat, and with the battle all hope of her re-ascending the throne of Scotland, for the present at least, if not forever, had been swept away. There remained three alternatives for her to choose between—she could go to France, to England, or to Spain. Acting upon the advice of Lord Herries, which accorded with her own inclination, she decided upon England, and that same night she wrote to Elizabeth this double letter, in prose and in verse:

"MY DEAR SISTER:

"I have many a time implored you to receive my storm-tossed ship in your haven during the tempest. If now she finds safe harbor there, I will cast anchor for the remainder of my days; otherwise the poor craft is in God's care, and she is well caulked and ready to defend herself against all the storms that blow. I have conducted myself with due respect toward you, and do still. Do not take it in bad part that I write thus, for

it is not due to suspicion on my part, as you can see, because I rely upon your friendship in everything,"

This sonnet accompanied the letter.

Un seul penser qui me profite et nuit
Amer et doux change en mon cœur sans cesse
Entre le doute et l'espoir qui m'oppresse,
Tant que la paix et le repos me fuit.

Donc, chère sœur, si cette carte suit
L'affection de vous voir qui m'oppresse,
C'este que je vis en peine et en tristesse,
Si promptement doux effet ne s'ensuit.

J'ai vu ma nef retâcher par contrainte
En haute mer, proche d'entrer au port,
Et temps serein se convertir en trouble,

Ainsi je suis en soucy et en crainte;
Non pas de vous, mais si souvent àtort
Fortune rompt violle et cordage double!

Elizabeth fairly shook with delight when she received this letter. For eight years past her hatred of Mary Stuart had increased steadily, day by day, and she had followed her with her eyes as the wolf follows the gazelle; and lo! the gazelle had come voluntarily to seek refuge in the wolf's lair. It was more than Elizabeth had dared to hope, and she at once dispatched an order to the Sheriff of Cumberland to inform Mary that she was ready to receive her.

So it was that one morning the inmates of the convent heard the blast of a trumpet on the shore. It announced the arrival of Queen Elizabeth's envoy on his mission to Queen Mary.

Thereupon most urgent appeals were made to the fugitive not to put herself in the hands of one who was her rival in power and glory and beauty, but the poor, dethroned Queen was overflowing with confidence in her "dear sister," and believed that she should enjoy at Elizabeth's court the position due to her rank and

misfortunes; and so she persisted in her purpose, in spite of all that any one could say. In our own day we have seen the same infatuation take possession of another royal fugitive, who put his trust, as Mary Stuart did, in the generosity of England, his bitter foe; like Mary Stuart, he was cruelly punished for his confidence, and for him the scaffold of Fotheringay became the murderous climate of St. Helena.

Mary therefore set out with her little retinue. When they reached the shore of Solway Firth they found there the warden of the English frontier, a gentleman named Lowther, who received the Queen with the utmost consideration, but informed her that he could allow but three of her women to accompany her. Mary Seaton immediately claimed the privilege of being one of them.

"Alas! little one," said the Queen, giving her her hand, "it ought to be another's turn now; you have already suffered too much for me and with me."

But Mary, whose sobs forbade her replying in words, clung to her hand, and shook her head as if to say that nothing in the world could separate her from her mistress.

Thereupon all those who accompanied the Queen renewed their entreaties to her to abandon her fatal determination, and even when she was two-thirds of the way across the plank leading to the boat, the Prior of Dundrennan, who had given her shelter and hospitality with touching devotion when it was a most dangerous thing for him to do, walked into the water to his knees to try to detain her. But it was all to no purpose; the Queen's resolution was not to be shaken.

At this moment Lowther approached.

"Madame," he said, "deign to allow me once more to express my regret that I cannot extend a cordial

welcome in England to all those who would be glad to follow you thither; but our Queen has given positive orders on the subject, and it is our duty to execute them. May I remind your Majesty that the tide favors us at this moment?"

"Positive orders!" cried the Prior; "do you hear, Madame? Oh! you are lost if you leave this shore! Back, while it is still time! Back, Madame, in heaven's name! Help, Sir Knights, help!" he shouted, turning to Lord Herries and the other gentlemen of Mary's suite; "do not permit your Queen to abandon you, but detain her, gentlemen, in heaven's name, detain her though you are forced to contend against herself as well as the English!"

"What means this violence, Sir Priest," said Lowther; "I am here at the express request of your Queen; she is free to return with you, and there is no occasion to resort to force. Madame," he continued, turning to the Queen, "is it your pleasure, of your own free will, to follow me to England? Tell me, I entreat you, for it is most important that all the world should know that your inclination is in no way forced."

"Sir," Mary replied, "I crave your pardon, in behalf of this worthy servant of God, and of his Queen, for aught that he may have said to offend you. I leave Scotland of my own free will, and put myself in your hands, with full confidence that I shall be free to remain in England with my royal sister, or to return to my kinsfolk in France. Your blessing, father," she said to the Prior, "and may God protect you!"

"Alas! alas!" muttered the priest, "not for us is God's protection needed, but for you, my daughter. May the blessing of a poor priest turn aside from your royal head the misfortunes which I foresee. Go, and

may it be with you as God in his infinite wisdom and mercy has decreed."

Thereupon the Queen gave her hand to the Sheriff, who led her aboard the boat, followed by Mary Seaton and two other female attendants only. The sails were set at once, and the little craft moved swiftly away toward the Cumberland shore. As long as it was in sight Mary's friends remained at the water's edge, making gestures of farewell to their mistress, who stood in the stern sheets, waving her handkerchief to them. At last the boat disappeared, and they made no further attempt to restrain their bitter grief. Fully justified it was, too, for the presentiments of the good Prior of Dundrennan came true, and they never saw Mary Stuart again.

When she landed on English soil, the Queen of Scotland was met by messengers from Elizabeth, who were instructed to express to her their mistress's profound regret that she was unable either to admit her to her presence, or to accord her the affectionate welcome which would be hers if she obeyed only the promptings of her heart. But it was absolutely necessary, they added, that Mary should first purge herself of all suspicion of guilty complicity in the death of Darnley, whose family, being subjects of Queen Elizabeth, were entitled to protection and justice at her hands.

Mary Stuart was so blind that she failed to see the trap spread before her feet, and she at once offered to establish her innocence to the satisfaction of her sister Elizabeth. But the latter no sooner had Mary's letter in her hands then she laid aside the functions of arbitrator to assume those of a judge; she appointed commissioners to hear the parties, and summoned Murray to appear as his sister's accuser.

Murray was informed of Elizabeth's secret purpose with regard to her rival, and he did not hesitate an instant. He went to England with the casket containing the three letters we have cited, divers pieces of verse, and some other documents tending to prove not only that the Queen had been Bothwell's mistress during Darnley's lifetime, but that she was privy to the murder of her husband.

On the other hand, Lord Herries and the Bishop of Ross, acting as advocates for the Queen, maintained that the letters were not genuine and that the handwriting was disguised, and in order to verify their claim they called for the testimony of experts, but it was refused; the result being that that important question was left to be discussed by future ages, and to this day no definite decision has ever been reached by students or historians.

After an inquiry lasting five months the Queen of England caused the parties to be informed that as nothing had been disclosed which impugned the honor of accuser or accused, the matter would be allowed to remain *in statu quo* until some new evidence was brought forward on one side or the other.

The logical result of this extraordinary decision would seem to have been that the Regent should be sent back to Scotland, and Mary Stuart restored to freedom. But on the contrary, she was transferred from Bolton Castle to Carlisle, from which place, as if to crown her grief, the poor Queen could see the blue mountains of Scotland.

Among the commissioners appointed by Elizabeth to investigate Mary's conduct was Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk. Whether he was honestly convinced of her innocence, or was influenced by the ambitious schemes

which were afterwards made the ground of accusation against him, and which were supposed to contemplate his own marriage with Mary Stuart, the betrothal of his daughter to the young King, and his appointment as Regent of Scotland—certain it is that he resolved to release the Queen from captivity. Several members of the English nobility, among others the Earls of Westmoreland and Northumberland, joined in the plot, and agreed to do their utmost to bring it to a successful issue. But their plans were betrayed to the Regent, and by him communicated to Elizabeth, who ordered Norfolk's arrest. Westmoreland and Northumberland were warned in time, and took refuge across the frontier in the marches which were favorably disposed to Queen Mary. The former crossed the channel to Flanders, where he died in exile; Northumberland was betrayed to Murray and imprisoned in Lochleven Castle, which kept closer watch over him than over its royal prisoner. Norfolk died on the scaffold; Mary Stuart's star had not lost its fatal influence.

Meanwhile the Regent had returned to Edinburgh, loaded with gifts, and practically victorious in his suit, as Mary was still a prisoner. He at once busied himself dispersing the remainder of her partisans, and as soon as the doors of Lochleven Castle had closed upon Northumberland he instituted proceedings, in the name of the young King James VI., against all those who had upheld the cause of his mother, particularly the Hamiltons, who since the affair of the "street sweeping" at Edinburgh had been mortal enemies of the Douglases. Six of the most prominent members of that family were condemned to death, and succeeded in obtaining a commutation of the sentence to perpetual banishment only through the intercession of John Knox, whose influence

in Scotland was then so great that Murray dared not refuse him.

One of these amnestied persons was a certain Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh, a true Scot of the old days, wild and revengeful, as the nobles of the first James' time. He was living in a hiding-place he had found in the Highlands, when he learned that Murray, who had bestowed his property upon one of his minions by virtue of the decree of confiscation against the exiles, had barbarously driven his invalid, bed-ridden wife out of her own house, without so much as giving her time to dress, although it was the coldest season of the year. The poor woman, left thus without clothes or food, or a roof to cover her head, had gone mad, and wandered over the country for some time in that condition, an object of universal sympathy, and of universal terror as well, for everyone was afraid of compromising himself by doing aught to alleviate her sufferings. At last she returned, to die of cold and starvation at the threshold of the door from which she had been so brutally driven forth.

When Bothwellhaugh was informed of her terrible fate, he gave no sign of anger, notwithstanding his violent temper; he remarked simply, with a smile of fearful meaning:

"'Tis well; I will avenge her."

The next morning Bothwellhaugh left the Highlands, armed with an order from the Archbishop of St. Andrews (who, as our readers will remember, followed the Queen's fortunes to the last moment), that a house which that prelate owned at Linlithgow should be placed at his disposal. This house was situated on the principal street, and had a wooden balcony looking upon the square, and a gate opening into the fields.

Bothwellhaugh entered the house after dark, took up his quarters on the first floor, stretched a black cloth over the walls so that his shadow could not be seen from the street, covered the floor with mattresses so that his steps could not be heard in the room below, tied a fleet horse all saddled and bridled in the garden, hollowed out the arch of the little gate leading into the fields so that he could pass beneath it at a gallop, loaded an arquebus, and shut himself up in his room.

All these preparations were due, as the reader may have guessed, to the fact that Murray was to pass through Linlithgow the next day. Secretly as he had made them they were very near amounting to nothing; for the Regent's friends warned him that it would be unsafe for him to pass through the town, which belonged almost entirely to the Hamiltons, and advised him to make a detour to avoid it.

But Murray was a brave man, and unaccustomed to recoil from real danger; so he simply scoffed at a danger which he looked upon as altogether fanciful, and boldly carried out his original plan.

As the street which the Archbishop's balcony overhung was included in his route as laid down, he rode into it, not at a gallop, preceded by guards to clear the road, as his friends advised, but at a foot-pace, which was rendered necessary by the great crowd which thronged the street to get a glimpse of him. When he arrived opposite the balcony, as if chance were in alliance with the murderer, the press was so great that he was forced to halt for an instant. Thus Bothwellhaugh was able to take sure aim. He rested his arquebus on the rail of the balcony, and having adjusted it with the utmost moderation and coolness, fired. The charge was so heavy that the bullet, after passing

through the Regent's body, killed the horse of a gentleman at his right. Murray fell to the ground, exclaiming: "My God! I am killed."

As there was no question as to the window from which the shot was fired, the Regent's followers immediately rushed at the street door of the house, and broke it down; but they were just in time to see Bothwellhaugh riding out through the gate on the horse which stood ready for him. They remounted their own horses, which they had left in the street, and galloped back through the garden in pursuit. Bothwellhaugh had an excellent horse, and was some distance in advance of his pursuers; but four of them were so well mounted that they soon began to gain upon him. Thereupon, seeing that whip and spurs were not enough, he drew his dagger and urged his horse on with that. The animal seemed to acquire fresh strength under that agonizing stimulus, and leaped across a ravine eighteen feet wide, thus placing an impassable barrier between his master and those who were pursuing him.

The murderer crossed over to France, and entered the Guises. His bold exploit had given him such a reputation, that overtures were made to him to assassinate Coligny some days before the St. Bartholomew. But Bothwellhaugh rejected them with indignant scorn; he avenged wrongs done to himself, he said, and was no assassin; they who had grounds for complaint against the Admiral had only to come and ask him what method he pursued, and go and do likewise.

Murray died during the night after he was wounded, leaving the Regency to the Earl of Lennox, Darnley's father.

When she learned that Murray was no more, Elizabeth cried that she had lost her best friend.

While these things were happening in Scotland, Mary Stuart was still held in durance, despite the urgent demands of Charles IX. and Henry III., one after the other. But Elizabeth, alarmed at the movement in her favor which had been attempted, ordered her removal to the castle of Sheffield, the neighborhood of which was constantly patroled by guards who were frequently changed. Meanwhile days and months and years rolled by and poor Mary, who found it so hard to bear her eleven months' imprisonment in Lochleven Castle, had been for fifteen or sixteen years dragged from prison to prison, despite her own remonstrances and those of the French and Spanish ambassadors, when she was at last consigned to Tutbury Castle, and the care of Sir Amyas Paulet, the last of her many gaolers. The quarters set apart for her there consisted of two low, damp rooms, where the little strength which remained to her gradually wore away, and there were days when she could not walk on account of the excrutiating pains in every limb. Then it was that she who had been Queen of two kingdoms, rocked in a golden cradle, and reared in silk and velvet, was compelled to humble herself so far as to beg her gaoler for a softer bed and warmer bed-clothing. This request, treated as an affair of state, gave rise to negotiations which lasted a month, after which she was allowed to have what she requested.

However the unhealthiness of her place of confinement, the cold, and privations of every sort did not act with sufficient rapidity upon that robust and healthy constitution. They tried to make Paulet understand how great a service he would render the Queen of England by shortening the existence of the rival who was already condemned to death in her mind, but was so slow to die.

But Sir Amyas Paulet, coarse and brutal as he was in his treatment of Mary, swore a great oath that, so long as she was in his care, she need have no fear of poison or the dagger, for he would himself taste all the dishes which were served at her table, and no person should approach her except in his presence. In fact certain assassins sent thither by Leicester—the same Leicester who aspired for a brief moment to win the hand of lovely Mary Stuart—were driven from the castle by its irate governor as soon as he learned with what object they had come.

So Elizabeth was fain to possess her soul in patience, contenting herself with harassing the unfortunate creature whom she could not kill, and living in hopes that some new opportunity would arise to put her at the bar of justice. This opportunity was long in coming, but Mary Stuart's unlucky star brought it about at last.

A young Catholic gentleman, the last remnant of the old-fashioned chivalry which was well-nigh extinct at that time, was raised to such a high pitch of exaltation by the Pope's excommunication, which declared that Elizabeth had forfeited her earthly throne and her hopes of salvation, that he resolved to restore Mary to liberty. She was beginning at that time to be looked upon rather as a martyr to her faith than as a political prisoner.

A law had been enacted by Elizabeth's command in 1585, providing that if any attack upon her person should be contemplated by or on behalf of anybody *who assumed to have a claim to the English throne*, a commission of twenty-five should be appointed, which should have exclusive jurisdiction to investigate the offence and pass sentence upon the culprits, whoever they might be.

Babington was not deterred by this law, nor discouraged by the example of his predecessors; he collected five of his friends, zealous Catholics like himself, who put their lives and their honor at stake in the plot in which he was the prime mover, and which had for its objects the assassination of Elizabeth and the accession of Mary Stuart to the English throne. But the scheme, well-laid as it was, was revealed to Walsingham, who allowed the conspirators to go as far as he thought he could safely do, and had them arrested the day before that fixed for the assassination.

Elizabeth's joy knew no bounds when this imprudent and desperate attempt at last placed her rival's fate in her hands, according to the letter of the law. Orders were at once issued to Sir Amyas Paulet to seize the prisoner's papers and transfer her to Fotheringay Castle. Thereupon the gaoler, with a hypocritical pretence of relaxing his usual severity, offered to allow the Queen to take the air on horseback, on the pretext that her health required it. The unhappy prisoner, who had not seen the green fields for three long years, except through the bars of her prison, joyfully accepted the offer, and rode out of Tutbury between two guards, and mounted, for greater security, on a horse whose legs were hobbled. These two guards escorted her to Fotheringay, where she found the apartment which she was to occupy already hung with black. Living, she had entered her tomb.

Babington and his accomplices had already been executed.

Meanwhile Mary's two secretaries, Curle and Nane, were arrested, and all her papers were seized and sent to Elizabeth, who ordered the commissioners to reassemble and proceed without delay with the trial of the prisoner. They reached Fotheringay on the fourteenth of October,

1586; the following morning they assembled in the great hall of the castle and began their investigations.

Mary at first refused to appear before them, on the ground that she did not admit their competence to be her judges, as they were not her peers; and she appealed to the ancient laws of England, which had never afforded her the slightest protection, but had invariably left her at the mercy of those who were stronger than she. But when she saw that the trial was proceeded with in her absence, and that calumnious statements of all sorts were presented to the tribunal, no one being there to refute them, she decided to appear.

We quote the report of the two examinations to which she was subjected, as transmitted by M. de Belliévre to M. de Villeroy. M. de Belliévre, as we shall see later, was an Envoy Extraordinary from Henry III. to Elizabeth.

"The Queen of Scotland, having taken her place at the end of the table in said hall, and said commissioners being seated around her, began as follows:

"'I do not consider that any one of you who are here assembled is my equal, or competent to be my judge to question me with reference to any charge. Therefore what I do and say to you at this moment is of my own free will, and I call God to witness that I am innocent of the calumnious charges which have been brought against me, and that my conscience is pure. A free princess am I and born a Queen, responsible to none save God, and to none save Him can I be called upon to render an account of my actions. Therefore do I renew my protest, so that my appearance before you may in no way prejudice myself, nor the kings, princes, and potentates, my allies, nor my son; and I demand that my protest be recorded and a copy thereof furnished me."

Thereupon the Chancellor, who was one of the commissioners, replied, and protested against the protest; he then ordered the commission under which they were proceeding to be read to the Queen,—a commission, he said, based upon the laws and statutes of the kingdom.

To this Mary rejoined by a further protest to the effect that the said laws and statutes were without force as against her, because they were not intended to apply to persons of her position.

The Chancellor's reply to this was that the commission was instructed to proceed against her, even though she refused to respond; and he declared that they would have done so, in view of the fact that she came within both provisions of the law, the conspiracy having been formed not only in her interest, but with her consent; to which the Queen replied that such a thought had never entered her mind.

Thereupon the letters which it was claimed that she wrote to Babington were read to her, together with his replies thereto.

Mary Stuart then declared that she never saw Babington, that she never had a conference of any sort with him, that she never in her life received a single letter from him, and that she defied any person in the whole world to maintain the charge that she had ever done aught that was prejudicial or hostile to the Queen of England. Furthermore she reminded her judges that, being so closely guarded, out of reach of intelligence from the outside world, far away from her friends, surrounded by her foes, and with no one to whom she could look for advice, she certainly had no opportunity either to take part in or give her assent to the intrigues of which she was accused. She said that many people wrote to her whom she did not know and that she

received quantities of letters which came from she knew not where.

Babington's confession was then read to her; but she replied that she did not know what he meant; if Babington and his confederates really said such things they were cowards, forgers and liars.

"Since you say that I wrote to Babington," she exclaimed, "show me my handwriting and my signature, and not false copies like these which you have filled full, at your leisure, of whatever falsehoods it pleased you to put in them."

Thereupon they showed her the letter which Babington, as they said, wrote to her. She glanced over it and said:

"I know nothing of this letter."

Next they showed her her alleged reply thereto and again she said:

"Nor do I know anything of this. If you will show me a letter, written and signed by myself, containing what you claim, I will agree to everything, but hitherto, as I have said, you have produced nothing worthy of notice—nothing but pretended copies of your own invention, to which you have added whatever it seemed good to you to add from time to time."

With that she rose and continued, with the tears rolling down her cheeks:

"If I ever consented to this or any other similar intrigue, the object of which was the death of my sister, I pray that God will have neither compassion nor pardon for me. I confess that I wrote to several persons, begging them to come to my assistance and deliver me from my wretched captivity, for I have been languishing in prison, a captive, ill-used princess, these nineteen years and seven months; but it never even came to my mind

to write or to wish such things against the Queen. Yes, and I also admit that I did what I was able to do to secure the release of several persecuted Catholics, and if I had been able then, or were able now to ensure their safety and save them from punishment, I would have done it and would do it now, so far as my ability might extend."

She turned to Secretary Walsingham.

"My Lord," she said, "the moment that I saw you in this place I knew whose hand dealt the blow; you have always been my bitterest enemy, and my son's, and you have prejudiced everybody against me."

Thus accused to his face, Walsingham rose.

"Madame," he replied, "I declare before God, who is my witness, that you are in error and that I have done nothing against you unworthy of a man of honor and integrity, either in my private capacity or as a public servant."

This was all that was said and done on this first day; on the following day the Queen was again brought before the commissioners, and, having taken her seat at the end of the table with the commissioners around her as before, she began thus, in a loud, firm voice:

"You are well aware, my Lords and gentlemen, that I am a sovereign Queen, anointed and consecrated in the house of God, and that I neither can nor should, for any cause whatsoever, be summoned to your presence nor made to stand at your bar, to be tried according to these laws and statutes which you put forward, for I am a free-born princess, and owe no more to any prince on earth than he owes me; and with regard to all this of which I am accused against my said sister, I cannot reply properly unless I am allowed the assistance of my counsel. If you proceed, do your worst; but from all

your judgments I enter my appeal to Almighty God, who is the only just and infallible judge, and to the kings and princes who are my allies and my peers."

This protest was also recorded, as she demanded.

She was then informed that she had written several letters to all the princes of Christendom, crying out against England and England's Queen.

"As for that," Mary replied, "it is another matter; I do not deny it, and if it were to be done again, I would do it, as I did before, in furtherance of my desire for freedom; nor is there any man or woman in the world, even of those lower in rank than I, who would not do as much, and would not resort to the assistance of their friends to obtain their release from captivity so hard as mine. You base an accusation against me upon certain letters of Babington; I do not deny that he wrote to me and that I replied; but if you find in my reply one single word as to the Queen, my sister, then I admit the justice of this proceeding against me. He wrote that he would set me at liberty, and I replied that I would accept his offer if he could carry out his plan without compromising either of us; that is all.

"As to my secretaries, they did not speak, but the torture to which they were subjected spoke with their tongues. Nor is there much reliance to be placed upon the confessions of Babington and his confederates, for, now that they are dead, you can put what words you please in their mouths; let him believe you who will."

The Queen refused to make any further reply unless she was allowed counsel, and withdrew to her apartment after renewing her protest. But the trial went on in her absence, as the Chancellor had threatened.

Meanwhile M. de Chateauneuf, French Ambassador at London, was too close to headquarters to be deceived

as to the goal to which affairs were tending. Consequently at the first news which reached him of Mary's being placed on trial, he wrote to King Henri III., urging him to intervene in behalf of the prisoner. Henri at once sent an extraordinary embassy to Elizabeth, headed by M. de Bellièvre. At the same time, having been informed that James VI., Mary's son, instead of interesting himself in his mother's fate, had replied to Courcelles, the French Ambassador at his court, when he ventured to speak to him of her: "I can do nothing; let her drink the draught she poured out for herself;" Henri III. wrote Courcelles the following letter, instructing him to spur the young prince on to second him in the steps he proposed to take.

21st November, 1586.

"COURCELLES:—I have received your letter of the 4th of October, and have read therein the observations of the King of Scotland in response to what you said to him of my earnest affection for him—observations which tend to show that he is disposed to reciprocate that feeling; but I would have been glad if your letter contained any indication that he was more kindly disposed toward the Queen, his mother, and that his heart prompted him to arrange matters in such way as to assist her in her present affliction, for the fact that she has been unjustly imprisoned eighteen years and more ought to induce him to lend a willing ear to the many schemes which have been proposed to secure her freedom—a thing which is naturally desired by all men, and more than all by those who are born of sovereign race, and to rule over other men. He ought also to consider that if my good sister the Queen of England hearkens to the counsels of those who wish that she

should stain her hands with Queen Mary's blood, it will redound to his lasting dishonor, especially as the universal judgment of mankind will be that he refused to give his mother the benefit of his good offices with the said Queen of England, as he should have done; for his representations might have been sufficient to move her, if he had chosen to make them as pressing as his filial duty would seem to require. Furthermore, it is greatly to be feared that, when his mother is dead, his turn will soon come, and the design will be formed to put him out of the way by violent means, in order to make it a simpler matter for those who are on the spot to assert their claims to the English succession after Elizabeth's death, and not only to defraud the King of Scotland of his rightful claim thereto, but to cast suspicion upon his right to his own crown. I cannot say in what plight my said sister-in-laws's affairs may be when you receive this letter; but I will say this, that in any event I desire that you should do your utmost, by urgent remonstrance and in every other way which occurs to you, to arouse the said King of Scotland to exert himself to defend and protect his mother; and that you should say to him from me that, as it is something for which, should he do it, he will be enthusiastically commended by all other kings and sovereign princes, so he must bear in mind that if he fail in this duty he will be severely blamed, and the result may well be very disastrous to his own interests. As to my own affairs, you will learn from this that the Queen, my mother, is soon to meet the King of Navarre and confer with him with a view to compose the disorders of this realm; if his affection for me is as great as mine for him, I hope that affairs will soon be brought to a satisfactory conclusion, and that my subjects will have some respite from the greivous ills

which necessarily result from a civil war. I pray the Creator, Courcelles, that he will have you in his holy keeping.

"Done at Saint-German-en-Laye the 21st day of November, 1586."

"Signed, HENRI.
"Countersigned, BRULART."

This letter at last aroused James VI. to make a feeble demonstration in his mother's behalf, and he sent the Master of Gray, Robert Melville and Sir William Keith to Queen Elizabeth. But although Paris was farther from London than Edinburgh, the French envoys arrived there in advance of the Scottish ones. It should be said, that when M. de Bellièvre reached Calais on November 27th he found there an express from M. de Chateauneuf urging him not to lose an instant, and in order to anticipate every possible obstacle, the Ambassador had chartered a vessel, which was lying in the harbor, ready to weigh anchor at a moment's notice. Despite their anxiety to make all possible haste, however, the ambassadors were obliged to await the good pleasure of the wind, which did not permit them to put to sea until Friday, the 28th, at midnight; and when they reached Dover at nine o'clock the following morning, they were so prostrated by seasickness that they were fain to abide a whole day in that town to recuperate. Not until Sunday the 30th, therefore, did M. de Bellièvre set out for London, in the coach provided for him by M. de Chateauneuf through M. de Braucaleon, accompanied by the gentlemen of his suite upon post horses. However, they made up for lost time by making few and brief halts upon the road, and finally reached London on Monday, December 1, at midday.

M. de Bellièvre at once sent one of his suite, one M. de Villiers, to the court, which was then at Richmond; the judgment had been secretly rendered six days before, and submitted to Parliament, who were discussing it with closed doors.

The French Ambassador could not have chosen a less auspicious moment to approach Elizabeth. To gain time, she refused to receive M. de Villiers, sending word to him that he would understand the reasons for her action the next day. When the next day came, the report was generally current in London that two members of the French embassy had died of the plague at Calais, and that, for that reason, however desirous she might be to oblige Henri III., the Queen could not expose her precious existence to the risk of contagion by receiving his envoys.

M. de Bellièvre's astonishment when he heard of this report, was unbounded; he declared that the Queen had been misled by a false and malicious rumor, and insisted upon being received. Nevertheless, he was put off for six days more; but as he threatened to wait no longer, but to start for home, and as Elizabeth was disturbed by the attitude of Spain, and, all things considered, was not anxious to embroil herself with France, she sent word to M. de Bellièvre in the morning of December 7, that she would be ready to receive him and his associates at Richmond Castle in the afternoon.

At the appointed time the French ambassadors presented themselves at the palace gates, and were ushered into the Queen's presence. They found her seated upon her throne, and surrounded by the most eminent of her subjects. MM. de Chateauneuf and de Bellièvre, the former being the regular Ambassador, and the latter an Envoy Extraordinary, thereupon saluted her in the name

of the King of France, and began by delivering the remonstrances which they were instructed to deliver.

Elizabeth replied, not only in the French tongue, but in most exquisite language; she allowed her passionate earnestness full sway, as she pointed out to the envoys of her brother Henri that the Queen of Scotland had always beset her, and that this was the third time that she had attempted her life, by a variety of means, all of which she had endured with too much patience; but that nothing in her whole life had ever wounded her so deeply as this last conspiracy, which, she added sadly, had cost her more sighs and tears than the loss of all her nearest and dearest friends. It was especially saddening to her, she said, because the Queen of Scotland was so nearly related to herself, as well as to the King of France. As MM. de Chateauneuf and de Bellièvre in their remonstrance had cited several examples drawn from history, she resumed her customary tone of pedantry when she came to reply to that portion of their harangue, and said that she had seen and read many books in her life, more, indeed, than the majority of women of her rank were accustomed to do, but that she had never found in all her reading one solitary instance of a deed like that which had been planned against her, planned, too, by her own kinswoman, whom the King, her brother, could not and should not sustain in her villainy, since it was his plain duty to hasten the punishment which was her due. Then she addressed herself particularly to M. de Bellièvre, laying aside her lofty air and assuming a gracious expression; she said that she deeply regretted that he was not accredited to her on a more cheerful occasion; that in a few days she would transmit her reply to her brother Henri, as to whose health she expressed great solicitude, as well as that of

the Queen-mother, who must, she said, be thoroughly exhausted by her labors in restoring peace to her son's realm. She then withdrew to her private apartments, and put an end to the audience.

The envoys returned to London and there awaited the promised reply; but while they were so employed, they learned through a secret channel that sentence of death had been pronounced upon Mary, and at once determined to return to Richmond and remonstrate further with the Queen. After two or three profitless journeys they were, at last, admitted for the second time to the royal presence on the 15th of December.

The Queen did not deny that the sentence had been pronounced, and it was very evident that she did not propose to exercise her power to pardon, so M. de Bellièvre, considering that his duties were at an end, demanded his passports. Elizabeth promised them to him within two or three days.

On the Tuesday following, December 17, Parliament was convoked at the Palace of Westminster, and then and there proclamation was made that Mary Stuart was condemned to death. Immediately thereafter the sentence was read with great pomp and solemnity on all the squares and street corners in London, whence it speedily spread throughout the kingdom. All the bells were rung for twenty-four hours, and strict orders were issued to every citizen to light a bonfire in front of his house, as the custom is in France on the eve of St. John the Baptist's day.

Amid the clangor of the bells, and in the glare of the bonfires, M. de Bellièvre determined to make one last effort, so that he might have no occasion to reproach himself, and wrote the following letter to Queen Elizabeth:

"MADAME:—We left your Majesty yesterday expecting, as you were graciously pleased to promise us, that we should within a few days receive your reply touching the prayer of our good master, your brother, in behalf of the Queen of Scotland, his sister-in-law and ally. But as we have been advised this morning that the sentence pronounced against the said Queen has been publicly proclaimed throughout the city of London, although we based other hopes upon your clemency and your good friendship for our Lord-King in order to be in no wise remiss in our duty, and believing that we shall thereby carry out the wishes of the King, our master, we determined to indite these presents to you. And we do hereby again humbly implore your Majesty not to refuse to grant his Majesty's most urgent and most affectionate prayer, that it may please you to spare the life of the said Queen of Scotland, which our Lord the King will receive as the greatest favor your Majesty could bestow upon him; just as, on the other hand, nothing could occur which would cause him greater displeasure, or wound him more deeply, than the proposed rigorous treatment of the said Queen, she being what she is. And, Madame, as the said King, our master, your good brother, when he accredited us to your Majesty in this behalf, did not deem it possible that such a denouement could be reached so speedily, we most humbly implore you, Madame, before the final step is irrevocably taken, to allow us sufficient time in which to advise him of the plight of the said Queen of Scotland, so that, before your Majesty comes to a final determination in the matter, you may know what his Most Christian Majesty may be pleased to say to you by way of remonstrance, concerning the most important affair which has been submitted to the judgment of

men, within our memory. Monsieur de Saint-Cyr, who will hand this to your Majesty will bring us, I trust, a favorable response.

"London, the 16th day of December, 1586.

"Signed, DE BELLIÈVRE,
"DE L'AUBESPINE CHETEAUNEUF."

On the same day M. de Saint-Cyr, and the other French gentlemen repaired to Richmond with the letter. But the Queen declined to receive them, excusing herself on the ground of a slight indisposition, and they were compelled to hand their letter to Walsingham, the Secretary of State, who promised to send the Queen's reply the next day.

In the face of that promise the French gentlemen were made to wait two days; but at last, towards evening of the second day, two English gentlemen called upon M. de Bellièvre at London, and without exhibiting anything in writing to confirm what they said, informed him verbally on the Queen's behalf, that in reply to their letter, and to indulge the wish they expressed therein for a reprieve, so that they might communicate the sentence to the King of France, her Majesty consented to respite the condemned for twelve days.

As this was Elizabeth's ultimatum, and it was useless to waste time in further efforts, M. de Genlis was at once despatched to King Henri III. with instructions to supplement the long despatch of MM. de Chateauneuf and de Bellièvre by telling the King verbally all that he had seen and heard relative to Queen Mary's affairs during his stay in England.

Henri III. immediately replied with a letter containing fresh instructions for MM. de Chateauneuf and de Bellièvre, but although he used the utmost diligence

M. de Genlis did not reach London until the fourteenth day, forty-eight hours, that is to say, after the expiration of the reprieve granted by Elizabeth. Nevertheless, as the sentence had not been carried out, MM. de Chateauneuf and de Bellièvre set out at once for Greenwich, about a league from London, where the court was in residence for the Christmas holidays, with the purpose of requesting an audience, at which they could transmit to her Majesty their King's reply. For four or five days they met with no success, but as they refused to be discouraged and returned again and again to the charge, they were at last summoned to the Queen's presence.

They were, as on the previous occasion ushered in with all the formalities of the etiquette then in vogue, and found Elizabeth awaiting them in the audience chamber. The ambassadors approached and saluted her, and M. de Bellièvre began to remonstrate with her in his master's name, respectfully and, at the same time with firmness. Elizabeth listened impatiently, moving restlessly about in her arm-chair. At last she could contain herself no longer; she rose, her cheeks flaming red with anger, and burst forth:

"Monsieur de Bellièvre, am I to believe that you really have it in charge from the King, my brother, to use such language to me?"

"Yes, Madame," M. de Bellièvre replied, bowing, "I have his express commands so to do."

"Have you them in writing and signed by his hand?"

"Yes, Madame," the ambassador replied, still with perfect coolness, "the King, your brother, expressly instructed me by letters signed with his own hand to address to your Majesty the remonstrance which I have had the honor to address to you."

"In that case," cried Elizabeth, giving free rein to

her passion, "I demand that you furnish me with a copy of such letters attested with your own hand, and be sure that you will answer for every word which you add to or subtract from them."

"Madame," Bellièvre rejoined, "it is not the practice of the kings of France or their agents to falsify letters or other documents, and to-morrow morning you shall have the copies you require; upon my honor I will answer for their accuracy."

"Enough, Sir, enough!" exclaimed the Queen; she motioned to all those who were present to leave the room, and remained nearly an hour closeted with MM. de Chateauneuf and de Bellièvre. No one knows what took place at that interview, except that the Queen undertook to send an ambassador to the King of France, and promised that he would be at Paris as soon as M. de Bellièvre, if not in advance of him, and would be the bearer of her final decision as to the affairs of the Queen of Scotland. Elizabeth then withdrew, giving the French envoys to understand that any further efforts they might make to see her would be of no avail.

On the thirteenth of January the ambassadors received their passports, and at the same time were informed that a ship of war was awaiting them at Dover.

On the very day of their departure a strange thing happened. A gentleman named Stafford, brother of the English ambassador to France called upon M. de Trappes, an attaché of the French embassy in London, and told him that he knew of a man in prison for debt who had something of the utmost importance to communicate to him, and in order to arouse his interest more certainly he added that this something was connected with the service of the King of France, inasmuch as it related to the concerns of Queen Mary of Scotland.

M. de Trappes, although he looked with suspicion upon the overture at first, did not wish to have any reason to reproach himself for negligence in a matter of such urgency in case his suspicions should prove to be ill-founded. He therefore went with Stafford to the prison where the man who wished to speak with him was detained.

When they met, the prisoner said to him that he was imprisoned for a debt of twenty crowns only, and that his longing for freedom was so great that if M. de Chateauneuf chose to pay that sum for him he would undertake to rescue the Queen of Scotland from her present peril by stabbing Elizabeth. M. de Trappes, who saw the trap that was set for the Ambassador, expressed his unbounded astonishment at the suggestion, and said that he was sure that M. de Chateauneuf would be horrified at the thought of any plot which included an attempt of any sort upon Elizabeth's life, or the slightest disturbance of the tranquillity of her kingdom. He refused to listen to anything further, but returned to M. de Chateauneuf and related to him all that had taken place. Immediately the Ambassador, who was not deceived as to the real cause of this proceeding, said to M. Stafford that it seemed most extraordinary to him that a gentleman, as he was, should dare to suggest such disgusting treason to another gentleman, and requested him to leave the embassy instanter and never to set foot within its walls again. Stafford thereupon withdrew and, pretending to believe that he was a lost man, begged M. de Trappes to allow him to cross the Channel with him and the French envoys. M. de Trappes referred this request to M. de Chateauneuf, who sent word to Stafford that he not only forbade him his house, but all communication of any sort with any member of the legation, so that he could see that his

request could not possibly be granted. He added that if he were not restrained by his regard for the Earl of Stafford, his fellow diplomat, he would denounce him on the instant to Elizabeth.

The same day Stafford was arrested.

After this incident M. de Trappes set out to overtake his companions, who had the start of him by some hours. Just as he arrived at Dover he was arrested and taken back to London where he was cast into prison.

He was questioned the same day and narrated everything that had taken place without reservation, appealing to M. de Chateauneuf to confirm what he said.

On the following day he was questioned a second time, and great was his amazement when, in answer to his request that his replies of the preceding day should be read to him, they produced, according to the custom of English courts, only fabricated copies, which contained statements compromising M. de Chateauneuf as well as himself. He cried out at this and entered a formal protest, refused to make any further answers, or to sign anything more, and was taken back to the Tower with ostentatious precautions intended to give the impression that he was held on a serious charge.

The next day M. de Chateauneuf was summoned before the Queen and was confronted with Stafford, who impudently insisted that the Ambassador was concerned in a conspiracy with M. de Trappes and a certain prisoner for debt, and that the conspiracy aimed at nothing less than the Queen's life. M. de Chateauneuf denied the allegation with much heat and indignation; but Elizabeth was too deeply interested in not being convinced to allow the strongest evidence to convince her. She informed M. de Chateauneuf that nothing but the immunity incident to his position as ambassador saved him

from being arrested like his confederate M. de Trappes. She at once made good her promise to send an ambassador to Henri III., but he was instructed not to explain the judgment which had been rendered, and the execution which was soon to follow, but to charge M. de Chateauneuf with complicity in a plot, the discovery of which was the only thing which could have determined her to consent to the death of the Queen of Scotland; but it had finally convinced her that her own existence would be threatened every hour, so long as her enemy was alive.

Elizabeth lost no time in taking measures to spread, not in London alone, but throughout England, the report of the latest peril she had escaped; so that when the Scotch ambassadors, who, as will be seen, had not traveled over-fast, reached London two days after the departure of the Frenchmen, the Queen replied to them that their request for clemency was particularly ill-timed, as she had but just acquired convincing proof that her own life was in danger while Mary Stuart lived.

Robert Melville essayed to reply, but Elizabeth lost her temper, and said that it was he who gave the King of Scotland the bad advice to exert himself in his mother's behalf and that if she had such an adviser she would have him beheaded.

To this Melville replied that he would never refrain from offering his master good advice even at the risk of his life, and that it would be more just to say that the man who would advise a son to let his mother be put to death without a protest deserved beheading.

At that Elizabeth ordered them to withdraw, and said she would communicate her reply to them.

Three or four days passed and, as they heard nothing further, they requested another audience to learn the

final decision of the Queen to whom they were accredited. She decided to grant their request, and the interview, as in M. de Bellièvre's case, consisted largely of complaints and recrimination. At last Elizabeth asked them what assurance they would give her that her life would be secure if she should consent to pardon the Queen of Scotland.

The envoys replied that they were authorized to promise, in the name of the King of Scotland, their master, and all the nobility of his realm, that Mary Stuart would renounce in favor of her son, all her rights to the English crown, and that she would furnish the King of France, and all her relatives and friends among the princes and nobles, as sureties for the due fulfillment of her promise.

At that reply the Queen forgot her customary presence of mind, and exclaimed:

"What do you say, Melville? Why, that would be to arm my enemy with a twofold claim, whereas he now has but a single one."

"Pray, does your Majesty regard the King, my master, as your enemy?" said Melville; "he believed that he was more fortunate, Madame, and that he was your ally."

"No, no," said Elizabeth, blushing; "that's a mere figure of speech, and if you will find a way to reconcile everything, gentlemen, I am ready to err on the side of clemency to prove to you that I look upon King James as my good and trusty friend; so do you seek a means of adjustment, and I for my part will do my best to find one."

With those words she left the room, and the ambassadors withdrew with a faint spark of hope kindled within their breasts.

On the evening of that day a gentleman from the court called upon the Master of Gray, the chief of the embassy, apparently with no other than a social purpose, and said to him in the course of conversation that it was very difficult to reconcile Queen Elizabeth's safety with the life of her prisoner; and, furthermore, that if the Queen of Scotland should be pardoned and either she or her son should ever sit upon the throne of England there would be no security for the nobles who had voted for death as members of the extraordinary tribunal; that there was but one way of adjusting the matter, namely, that the King of Scotland should renounce his own claim to the crown of England; otherwise Elizabeth could never venture to spare Queen Mary's life with a due regard to her own safety.

Gray, gazing earnestly into his face, asked him if his sovereign had instructed him to make that suggestion to him. The gentleman disclaimed any authority in the premises and said that it was entirely his own idea, and was put forward by way of advice only.

Elizabeth accorded a final interview to the Scottish envoys, on which occasion she said to them that she had considered the matter from every point of view, but as she could not devise any way by which her own life could be assured if she were to spare the life of the Queen of Scotland, she was unable to grant their request.

Gray replied that if that were her final decision, his orders in that contingency required him to say that they formally protested in King James' name that the entire proceeding against his mother was void and of none effect because Queen Elizabeth could have no jurisdiction over one who was a queen like herself, and her equal in birth and rank; and therefore they declared

that immediately upon their return, and when their master had learned from their lips the result of their mission, he would assemble his Parliament and would send messengers to all the princes in Christendom to concert measures with them to avenge her whom they had failed to save.

Thereupon Elizabeth flew into a passion once more; she said that they certainly were not commissioned by their King to hold such language to her; but they at once offered to furnish her with the protest in writing and signed by them. Elizabeth replied that she would send an ambassador to arrange all that with her good friend and ally, the King of Scotland. The envoys then told her that their master would listen to no one until they had returned, whereupon she requested them not to be in haste to take their leave, as she had not as yet arrived at an irrevocable determination in the matter.

In the evening following this audience, Lord Highley called upon the Master of Gray, and commented admiringly upon a handsome pair of pistols of Italian manufacture. As soon as he took his leave Gray handed the pistols to the nobleman's cousin and requested him to take them to him with his compliments. The young man was highly pleased with the commission, and went at once to the royal palace, where his kinsman had apartments, to deliver the gift which was entrusted to him. He was hardly within the outer doors when he was arrested and searched and the weapons found upon him. Although they were not loaded, he was at once arrested, but instead of taking him to the Tower, they imprisoned him in his own room.

The next day it was currently reported that the Scottish King's ambassadors had taken their turn at planning

to asassinate the Queen, and that pistols furnished by the Master of Gray himself were found upon the would-be murderer.

Bad faith was so obtrusively apparent in this performance, that the Ambassadors could no longer close their eyes to it. They were finally convinced that they could do nothing for poor Mary Stuart, so they abandoned her to her fate, and started for Scotland the next day.

Directly they were gone, Elizabeth sent Davison, her secretary, to Sir Amyas Paulet. He was instructed to sound him anew with regard to his prisoner. The Queen was terrified, in spite of herself, at the thought of a public execution, and recurred to her original idea of poison or assassination; but Sir Amyas Paulet vowed that no person except the executioner should be admitted to Mary's presence, and that even he must be provided with a warrant drawn in proper form.

Davison reported his reply to Elizabeth, who stamped her foot impatiently as she listened, and when he had done could not contain her wrath.

"God's death!" she cried; "what a scrupulous villain is this, who prates incessantly of his fidelity, and refuses to prove it!"

It was necessary that Elizabeth should at last come to some decision. She asked Davison for the warrant; he presented it to her, and she signed it without the least indication of emotion, forgetting that she was herself the daughter of a queen who died on the scaffold. Having ordered the great seal of England to be affixed, she said, with a laugh:

"Go and say to Walsingham that all is over for poor Queen Mary, but break it to him gently, for he is ill, and I fear the shock may kill him."

The pleasantry was the more brutal in that Walsingham

was well known to be the most inveterate enemy of the Queen of Scotland.

Toward evening of the same day, which was Saturday, Mr. Beale, Walsingham's brother-in-law, was summoned to the palace. The Queen handed him the death-warrant, and with it an order addressed to the Earls of Shrewsbury and Kent, and other noblemen and gentry whose estates were in the neighborhood of Fotheringay to attend at its execution. Beale took with him the executioner from London, whom Elizabeth had ordered to be dressed in black velvet for this great function, and set out two hours after he received his orders.

For two months past Queen Mary had been aware of the finding of the commissioners. On the day when their judgment was rendered, she was informed of it by her chaplain, who was permitted to see her but that one time. Mary profited by his visit to hand him three letters which she wrote on the spot—one to Pope Sixtus V., one to Don Bernardo Mendoza, and the third to the Duc de Guise. This last-mentioned letter was in these words:

"4th of December, 1586.

"My good cousin, dearer to me than any one else in the world: this is to bid you farewell, for I am on the point of being put to death by virtue of an unjust judgment, and such a death as no one of our race, thank God, has ever suffered. But, my good cousin, praise the Lord, for I am of no use in this world to the cause of God and His Church, prisoner as I am, whereas, on the other hand, I hope that my death will bear witness to my constancy in the faith, and my willingness to suffer for the maintenance and restoration of the Catholic religion in this ill-fated island. And, although

no executioner has ever dipped his hand in our blood, be not ashamed, my dear cousin, for the judgment of heretics, who have no jurisdiction over me, a free Queen, will be of profit in God's sight to the children of His Church. If I would consent, however, to what they propose, I should not suffer this blow. Our whole family has been persecuted by these fanatics, witness your own good father, through whose interposition I hope to receive forgiveness at the hands of the Almighty Judge. I commend my poor servants to your kindness, and request you to pay my debts, and to provide for a yearly obit for the repose of my soul, not at your own expense, but by contributions and royal ordinance, as you will feel called upon to do when you are advised of my intentions by my unfortunate and devoted servants, who will witness the last act of the tragedy of my life. May God prosper you and your wife and children, brothers and cousins, and especially the head of our family, my good brother and cousin. May the blessing of God be upon your children whom I commend to His loving care, no less earnestly than my own son, unfortunate and maltreated as he is. You will receive certain rings from me which will remind you to pray God for the soul of your poor cousin, who is without assistance or counsel, other than that of the Lord, who endows her with strength and courage to stand alone and face a mob of ravening wolves. To God be the glory.

"I particularly request you to put implicit faith in what will be said to you by a person who will hand you a ring of rubies from me; for I take it upon my conscience to say that he will tell you the truth as to the matter which I have entrusted to him, and especially that portion which relates to my poor servants, and the interests of one of them. I commend that person to

you for her sincerity, simple mindedness, and integrity, hoping that some fitting place may be provided for her. I have selected her as the most impartial of all my adherents, and the one who will convey my wishes to you in the plainest and simplest terms. Let nobody know, I beg, that she has talked with you privately, for the resultant jealousy would inevitably be her ruin. I have suffered bitterly for two years and more, but have not been able to let you know for a very important reason. God be praised for all His works, and give you grace to persevere in the service of the Church so long as you live, and may our family never lose the honorable distinction of being always ready, women as well as men, to shed our blood in fighting the battles of the faith, leaving all worldly considerations aside. As for myself, I esteem that my birth, both on my father's and my mother's side, makes it encumbent upon me to offer my blood in that behalf, and I have no intention of failing in my duty. Jesus who was crucified for us, and all the noble army of martyrs will, by their intercession, make us worthy to offer our earthly bodies as a voluntary sacrifice to His glory.

"Thinking to humble me they cut down my dais, and my keeper afterward came and offered to write to the Queen, saying that it was not done at his behest, but by the advice of some of the council. I showed them the Cross of our Blessed Lord upon the dais instead of our royal arms. You will hear the whole story; they have been more mild in their treatment since.

"Your loving cousin and devoted friend,

"MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTLAND
AND DOWAGER OF FRANCE."

From the day on which she learned of the judgment rendered by the commissioners, Mary had abandoned all hope, as she knew that naught could save her but Elizabeth's pardon she gave herself up for lost, and thought only of making preparations for death. The cold and dampness of the various prisons in which she had been confined had so affected her that she was at times almost paralyzed in all her limbs, and she was haunted by the fear that she might be in that condition when they came to fetch her at the last moment, so that she would be unable to walk to the scaffold with a firm and resolute step, as she proposed to do. So she sent for Bourgoin her physician, told him that she had a strong presentiment that her death was imminent, and asked him what she must do to prevent a return of the rheumatic pains which paralyzed her strength. He replied that it would be well for her to purge herself with fresh herbs.

"Go then," said the Queen, "and ask Sir Amyas Paulet from me to allow you to go out into the fields and gather them."

Bourgoin went down to Sir Amyas, who was himself a great sufferer from sciatica, and on that account the more likely to appreciate the urgency of the Queen's need. But the request, simple as it was, met with many obstacles. Sir Amyas said that he could do nothing without referring the matter to his colleague Drury, but that he would send for ink and paper, and Master Bourgoin could then make a list of the herbs which he required, and they would try to procure them for him.

Bourgoin replied that he was not sufficiently familiar with English, and the village apothecaries did not know enough Latin for him to risk the Queen's life on the chance of an error on his part, or theirs. At last after endless hesitation Paulet permitted Bourgoin to go out,

and he did so, accompanied by the apothecary Gorjon. The next day the Queen entered upon the treatment suggested.

The Queen's forebodings were but too well justified; on Tuesday, February 17, about two in the afternoon, the Earls of Kent and Shrewsbury, and Beale sent word to the Queen that they desired to speak to her. The Queen replied that she was ill and in bed, but that, if what they had to say to her was of serious consequence, and they would give her a little time, she would rise. They replied that the communication which they had to make admitted no delay, and that they therefore begged her to receive them, whereupon she at once rose, slipped on a morning dress, and took her seat by a small table, where she was accustomed to pass a great part of each day.

The two Earls, accompanied by Beale, Amyas Paulet and Drew Drury, entered the room. Behind them came her favorite maids and confidential servants, attracted by curiosity born of an agony of dread. There were Renée de Really, Giles Maubray, Jane Kennedy, Elspeth Curle, Mary Paget, and Susan Kercady, and Dominique Bourgoin, her physician, Pierre Gorjon, her apothecary, Jacques Gervais, her surgeon, Annibal Stewart, her valet, Didier Sifflart, her butler, Jean Lauder, her pantler, and Martin Huet, her steward.

The Earl of Shrewsbury, removing his hat, as did all those who were in the room, who stood with their heads bare while they were in the Queen's presence, then addressed Mary in English as follows:

"Madame, the Queen of England, my august mistress, has sent me to you with the Earl of Kent and Sir Robert Beale here present, to make you to know that, after an impartial and exhaustive investigation of the delict of

which you have been accused and found guilty, the results of which investigation have already been submitted to your Grace by Lord Buckhurst, and having delayed the execution of the sentence to the last possible moment, she can no longer resist the importunity of her subjects, who in their great and affectionate fear for her safety, are urging her to cause the sentence to be executed. To that end we have come, Madame, bearers of a commission, and we humbly beseech you to be pleased to listen to the reading thereof."

"Read on, my Lord, I listen," said Mary, perfectly calm.

Robert Beale thereupon unfolded the commission, which was written on parchment and sealed with a great seal of yellow wax, and read as follows:

"Elizabeth, by the grace of God, Queen of England, France and Ireland, to our trusty and well-beloved cousins, George, Earl of Shrewsbury; Henry, Earl of Kent; Henry, Earl of Derby; George, Earl of Cumberland, and Henry, Earl of Pembroke."*

"Greeting:

"In view of the sentence pronounced by us and the members of our council, nobles and judges, against the former Queen of Scotland, bearing the name of Mary, daughter and heiress of James the Fifth, King of Scotland, and commonly called Queen of Scotland and Dowager of France, which sentence all the states of our kingdom in our last Parliament assembled, not only ratified, but after mature deliberation declared to be just and reasonable; and in view likewise of the urgent prayer and request of our subjects, entreating us to take

*The Earls of Cumberland, Derby and Pembroke did not obey the Queen's commands, and were not present at the reading of the sentence, nor at its execution.

measures for the publication thereof, and for its execution upon her person inasmuch as they deem her to have fully merited her fate, adding that her detention is, and would continue to be a source of daily peril, not to our life alone, but to themselves and their posterity, and to the public welfare of this kingdom, as well in the matter of the Gospel and the true religion of Christ, as for the peace and tranquillity of the realm, and remonstrating against farther delay on our part in granting a commission to execute said sentence; in order amply to satisfy the prayers of our Parliament, by whom we are informed every day that all our loyal subjects, as well of the nobility, than whom no advisers could be wiser and more devoted, as of those of humbler condition, out of their humble and affectionate solicitude for our life, and consequent dread of the destruction of the present divinely happy state of the realm, if we fail to execute said sentence, do consent to, and desire its execution, although the general and constant requests, entreaties and advice urge us in a direction contrary to our natural inclination, nevertheless, being well persuaded of the weight of their continual representations, as tending to the security of our person, and likewise that of every inhabitant of our kingdom; we have at last consented and given order that justice be done, and for the execution of said Mary. And considering our entire confidence in your fidelity and loyalty, and especially of your devoted affection for our person and our common country, of which you are noble and worthy ornaments, we do command and enjoin you, upon sight hereof, to repair to Fotheringay Castle, where the said Queen of Scotland now is, in the keeping of our friend, and trusty servant and adviser, Sir Amyas Paulet, and there to take custody of the said Queen of Scotland, and see

to it that by your command execution is done upon her person in presence of yourselves and of Sir Amyas Paulet, and of such other officials as you shall order to be present; in witness whereof, and that said execution may be carried out in such manner and form, at such time and place, and by such persons as you five, four, three, or two shall, in your discretion, deem meet, all laws, statutes and ordinances to the contrary notwithstanding, we have caused the Great Seal of England to be affixed to these presents, which shall be full and sufficient warrant forever for you and each of you, and for all who shall be present or shall do by your command aught pertaining to the execution of said sentence.

"Done at our Palace of Greenwich, the first day of February (February 10, new style), in the twenty-ninth year of our reign."

Mary listened to the reading with the utmost tranquillity and queenly dignity; when it was at an end she said, crossing herself:

"Thrice welcome be aught that comes in the name of God! I thank Thee, O Lord, for that Thou dost deign to put an end to all the ills Thou hast seen me suffer for nineteen years and more."

"Madame," said the Earl of Kent, "be not offended with us because of your condemnation; it was essential for the tranquillity of the State and the spread of the new religion."

"In that case," cried Mary, joyfully, "it will be my blessed lot to die for the faith of my fathers; in that case God deigns to accord me the glory of martyrdom. I thank Thee, O my God," she added, clasping her hands with less excitement, but more pious fervor, "I thank Thee for that Thou dost deign to permit me to

end my life in such a way, which I was not worthy to do. That, O my God, is truly a proof that Thou dost love me, and an assurance that Thou dost receive me in the number of Thy servants; for, although the sentence had been communicated to me, I was greatly afraid, in view of the manner in which I have been treated for nineteen years, that I might not be so near as I am to a blissful ending of my life; for I thought that your Queen would not dare to lay her hand upon me, who am, by God's grace, a queen like herself, like herself the daughter of a king, consecrated like herself, her nearest relative, too, and like herself, a grand-daughter of King Henry VII., and who have had the honor of being Queen of France, of which kingdom I am still Queen Dowager. My fear on this point was the greater," she added, placing her hand upon a New Testament which lay upon the little table by her side, "because I swear upon this holy book that I have never sought, consented to, or even desired the death of my sister, the Queen of England."

"Madame," rejoined the Earl of Kent, taking a step toward her, and pointing to the Testament, "that book upon which you swore is not true, for it is the popish version; and no more weight is to be attached to your oath than to the book upon which it is sworn."

"My Lord," retorted the Queen, "what you say may be conclusive to your mind, but not to mine, for I know that this book is a true and faithful translation of the word of God, made by a very learned doctor and godly man and approved by the Church."

"Madame," Kent replied, "your Grace's mind has been formed on the instruction you received in your youth, and you have never inquired for yourself as to what is good or bad. It is not surprising, therefore,

that you have clung to your error through lack of having ever listened to any one competent to tell you the truth. For that reason, as your Grace has but a few hours to remain in the world and, consequently, no time to lose, we will, with your permission, send for the Dean of Peterborough, the most learned of living men in religious matters. His words will prepare you for your salvation, which you are now endangering to our great sorrow and that of our august Queen, by all these papistical follies and abominations and childish antics, which debar Catholics from the Holy Word of God, and from knowledge of the truth."

"You are wrong, my Lord," the Queen mildly replied, "if you think that I grew to womanhood indifferent to the faith of my fathers, and without bestowing much serious thought upon a matter of such vast consequence as religion. On the other hand my life has been passed with students and learned men, who have given me all needful instruction in that direction, and I have feasted my mind upon their works since I have been bereft of the privilege of listening to them. During my whole life I have never doubted for one instant, and it is not at this hour of my death that my soul will be oppressed with doubt for the first time. The Earl of Shrewsbury, here present, will tell you that at the time of my coming to England I passed one whole Lenten season, which I now repent having done, listening to your most learned doctors, without being in the slightest degree impressed by their arguments. It would, therefore, be altogether useless, my Lord," she added with a smile, "to send for the Dean of Peterborough, however learned he may be. The only favor I have to ask at your hands, my Lord—and I shall be most grateful if it be granted—is that you will kindly send to me my chaplain, who is kept

imprisoned in this castle, to comfort me and prepare me to meet death; or, if that is impossible, any other priest, it matters not whom, though it be the poor curate of a poor village, for I am no harder to please than God, and I do not ask that he have learning, if only he have faith."

"It is with deep regret, Madame," said Kent, "that I am compelled to refuse your Grace's request, but it would be contrary to our religion and our conscience, and we should lay ourselves open to grave reproach. For that reason we once more suggest the venerable Dean of Peterborough, being certain that your Grace will derive more comfort and satisfaction from him than from any bishop, priest, or vicar of the Catholic faith."

"Thanks, my Lord," the Queen rejoined, "but I care for no other, and as my conscience is not stained with the crime for which I am to die, martyrdom, with God's help, will take the place of confession. And now I will venture to remind you, my Lord, of your own suggestion, that I have but a few hours to live; those few hours, if they are to be made of profit to me, should be passed in prayer and meditation, and not in fruitless discussion."

With that she rose and, with a courteous salute to the two earls, Robert Beale, Paulet, and Drury, she signified by a dignified wave of the hand that she wished to be left alone and at peace. As they were about to take their leave, she said:

"Apropos, my Lords, at what hour am I to prepare for death?"

"To-morrow about eight o'clock, Madame," stammered the Earl of Shrewsbury.

"'Tis well," said Mary; "but have you no reply for me from my sister Elizabeth to a letter which I wrote to her about a month since."

"To what did the letter relate, Madame, by your leave?" asked the Earl of Kent.

"To my funeral and interment, my Lord; I asked to be buried in France, in the cathedral at Rheims, beside the late Queen, my mother."

"That cannot be, Madame. But do not disquiet yourself concerning all these details; the Queen, my august mistress, will make suitable provision therefor. Has your Grace any further request to make?"

"I would be glad to know," said Mary, "if my servants will be permitted to return to their own countries with the pittance I may be able to give them, which will, in any event, be but an inadequate return for the length of time they have passed in my service, and the long imprisonment they have endured because of me."

"We have no authority to answer for that, Madame," said Kent, "but we think that your desire will govern in this as in other respects. Is this all that your Grace desires to say to us?"

"Yes, my Lord," said the Queen, saluting a second time, "and you may now withdraw."

"One moment, my Lords; in heaven's name, one moment!" cried the aged physician, leaving the ranks of the servants, and throwing himself at the feet of the two earls.

"What do you want?" demanded Lord Shrewsbury.

"To impress upon you, my Lords," replied Bourgoin, weeping; "how brief is the time that you allow the Queen for a matter of such importance as this of preparing for death. Consider, my Lords, the rank which this woman whom you have condemned has held among the princes of the earth, and whether it is kind and decent to treat her like any common culprit of low estate. And if not for the sake of this noble Queen,

my Lords, let it be for our sakes, her unhappy servants, who, having had the honor of living with her so many years, cannot part from her so suddenly and without time for preparation. Consider this also, my Lords, that a woman of her rank and condition should have some time in which to arrange her affairs. What will become of her and us, in God's name, if our dear mistress has no time before dying to put her accounts in order, and arrange her papers. She has services to pay for, and pious works to provide for, and she will be compelled to neglect one or the other. We know that she will give all her time to our matters, and thus, my Lords, she will neglect her own spiritual welfare. Pray grant her a few days more, my Lords; as our mistress is too proud to ask such a favor for herself, I ask it, in the names of us all, and implore you not to refuse to a few poor servants a favor which your august Queen certainly would not refuse if they could have the honor of laying their petition at her feet."

"Is it true, Madame," Robert Beale inquired, "that you have not yet made your will?"

"I have not, Sir," the Queen replied.

"In that case, my Lords," said Beale, "it would perhaps be well to grant her a few days' respite."

"Impossible, Sir," replied Lord Shrewsbury, "the time is fixed and we have no right to change it even by one minute."

"Enough, Bourgoin, enough," said the Queen; "I command you to rise."

Bourgoin obeyed, and Shrewsbury turned to Sir Amyas Paulet, who was behind him.

"Sir Amyas," he said, "we place this woman in your hands; you will look well to her and keep her safely until our return."

With these words he left the room, followed by Kent, Beale, Paulet and Drury, and the Queen was left with her retainers.

She turned to her women with a countenance as serene as if the approaching crisis were of the most trivial importance.

"Well, Jane," she said to Kennedy, "did I not always tell you, and did I not know perfectly well that their real purpose was to do just what they have done, and that I could see throughout their manœuvres the real end to which they were tending, and that I was too great an obstacle to the progress of their false religion to be allowed to live? Come," she continued, "let supper be served at once, so that I may put my affairs in order."

She saw that her servants, instead of obeying her, stood weeping and lamenting. "My children," she said, with a sad smile, but without a tear in her eye, "this is no time for weeping, far from it; for, if you love me, you should rejoice that the Lord, in allowing me to die for His cause, relieves me from the tortures I have undergone for nineteen years. For my own part, I thank Him for according me the privilege of dying for the glory of His religion and His Church. Let every one take patience therefor, and while the men make ready the supper, we women will pray to Him."

The men at once went out, weeping and sobbing, and the Queen and her women fell on their knees. When they had repeated several prayers, Mary rose, and sending for such money as she still possessed, she counted it and divided it into a number of portions, which she placed in separate purses, with the name of the persons for whom they were intended written in her own hand.

Soon supper was served and she took her place at

table with her women as usual, the other servants standing behind their chairs, or going in and out. Her physician waited upon her as he had been in the habit of doing since they sent away her maître d'hotel. She ate neither more nor less than usual, speaking much, during the meal, of the Earl of Kent, and the manner in which he had betrayed his zeal for the new religion by his eagerness to furnish her with a professor of that religion instead of a priest.

"Fortunately," she said, laughingly, "it would have needed a more clever casuist than he to induce me to change my faith."

Meanwhile Bourgoin was weeping behind the Queen, for he was reflecting that it was the last time he should wait upon her, and that at that hour on the morrow she who was now eating and talking and laughing would be naught but a cold and lifeless corpse.

When the repast was ended, the Queen called all her retainers, and before anything was taken from the table, poured out a cup of wine, rose, and drank their healths, coupling therewith a request that they would drink to her salvation. A glass was thereupon handed to each of them; and they all knelt where they stood, so says the narrative from which we take these details, and drank as she requested, mingling their tears with the wine, and craving her forgiveness if they had offended her in aught.

The Queen granted it with all her heart, and begged them to do as much for her, and to forget her impatient and testy moods, which she asked them to attribute to her captivity. She then discoursed to them at considerable length, explaining their duty to God, and exhorting them to hold fast to the Catholic faith; and she urged them, when she should be no more, to dwell

together in peace and charity, forgetting all their trivial dissensions of the past.

When she had said all that she had to say, she rose from the table intending to go down to her dressing-room to look over the clothing and jewelry which she had to dispose of; but Bourgoin suggested that it would be much better if she ordered everything brought to her bedroom, for that course would save her considerable fatigue, and would prevent the English from spying. This last argument convinced the Queen, and while her servants were taking their supper she had in the first place all her dresses brought to the ante-room, took the list of them from the hands of her valet, and began to write opposite each article the name of the person for whom she intended it. That person at once took the article in question and laid it aside. Those things which were of such nature that they could not well be given away thus, she ordered to be sold, and the proceeds used to pay the expenses of her servants when they should return to their respective homes, for she knew that their expenses would be heavy, and that none of them had means to defray them. When she had gone through the list in this way she wrote her name at the foot of it, and handed it to her valet, as a sign that he might go.

She then entered her bedroom, whither all her rings, trinkets and most valuable ornaments had been taken, looked them all over carefully, even to those of the least value, and distributed them just as she did the dresses, so that every one, whether present or absent, received something. She also entrusted to her most trusted servitors the jewels which were destined for the King and Queen of France, for her son the King of Scotland, for the Queen-mother, and for MM. de Guise

and de Lorraine; not one of all her royal kindred, male or female, did she overlook.

She expressed a desire, furthermore, that each of her servants should retain such articles as were properly in his or her care; that the linen, for instance, should go to the maid who looked after it, her embroidery to the one who had it in charge, the silver plate to her butler, and so through the list.

When they asked her to give them their discharge, she said that it would be useless to them.

"You are responsible to none but me, and so after to-morrow you will be responsible to no one."

But when they reminded her that the King, her son, might put forward a claim to their services, she admitted the force of the argument and gave them what they asked.

As she had no hope of being allowed to receive a visit from her confessor, she wrote him the following letter:

"I have been harassed all day because of my religious belief, and have been urged to receive ministrations of a heretic. You will learn from Bourgoin and the others that all that was said to me on the subject was absolutely without effect, and that I did not cease to assert my fealty to the faith in which I propose to die. I asked that you might be permitted to receive my confession, and administer the sacrament, but my request was unkindly refused, as well as my further request that my body should be taken to France, and that I be allowed to make my will without hindrance, so that I can write nothing except with their hands, and subject to the good pleasure of their mistress.

"As I am not permitted to see you, I here confess my sins to you in general, and not specifically as I would otherwise have done, and I beseech you, in God's name,

to watch and pray with me this night, to help me atone for my sins, and to send me absolution, and your forgiveness for whatever wrong I may unwittingly have done you. I will try to see you in their presence, as I am to be allowed to see my maître d'hotel, and if I am successful I will ask your blessing on my knees before them all. Send me the most fervent and comforting prayers that you know for to-night and to-morrow morning, for my time is but short, and I have not the leisure to write. Have no fear that I will not recommend you as I do my other servants; your livings will certainly be assured to you.

"Adieu, for I can spare no more time. Send me in writing all that you are able to find in the way of prayers and exhortations, the best fitted to secure my salvation. I send you my last little ring."

No sooner had she written the last word in this letter, than she began to write her will, and almost without lifting her pen from the paper she covered two large sheets. No one was forgotten, whether present or absent, and she distributed the little that she had with most scrupulous impartiality, paying heed rather to the needs of the beneficiaries than to their services. The executors selected by her were the Duc de Guise, her cousin german, the Archbishop of Glasgow, her Ambassador, the Bishop of Ross, her first chaplain, and M. de Ruysseau, her chancellor, all four being eminently proper selections for the position, the first because of his rank and influence, the two bishops because of their high standing as pious, conscientious men, and the fourth, because of his knowledge of the world.

When her testament was drawn to her satisfaction, she wrote thus to the King of France:

"Monsieur, my brother-in-law:

"Having, by God's will, and for my sins, probably, thrown myself into the clutches of this Queen, my cousin, where I have suffered much from weariness of spirit for twenty years past, I have been at last sentenced to death by her and her parliament. Having asked for my papers (taken from me by them) in order to make my will, I failed to recover anything which is of use to me, nor could I obtain so small a thing as permission to write down my last wishes freely, nor the promise that after my death my body should be taken, as I very earnestly desire, to your kingdom, of which I once had the honor to be Queen, I, your sister and your ally. This very day, after dinner, my sentence, to be executed to-morrow morning at eight o'clock, like a common criminal, was read to me without any pretence of respect.

"I have not time to narrate to you fully all that has taken place; but if you deign to listen to my physician, and to others of my heart-broken servants, you will hear the truth, that with God's help, I scorn death, which I protest that I am to suffer, innocent of any crime, even had I been a subject of this realm which I never was. However, my adherence to the Catholic faith, taken in connection with my claim to the English throne, is the real cause of my condemnation, and yet they will not allow me to say that I die for religion's sake, for my religion is too much for theirs. This is so true that they have taken my chaplain from me, and although he is imprisoned in this same castle they will not allow him to visit and comfort me, or administer the holy sacrament; but, on the other hand, they have been most persistent in pressing me to receive the ministrations of one of their ministers whom they brought here for that purpose.

The bearer of this letter, as well as the rest of my servitors, the larger part of whom are your subjects, will bear witness of the way in which I performed this last duty.

"It remains for me now to beseech you, as the Most Christian King, as my brother-in-law and long-time ally, who have often protested your affection for me, to demonstrate that affection by your virtue and charity in relieving my conscience of the burden of which I cannot relieve it without your assistance, that is to say in rewarding my faithful, heart-broken servants, over and above their wage; and more than that, in causing prayers to be offered for a Queen who has been called the Most Christian Queen, and who dies a true Catholic, bereft of all her means. So far as my son is concerned I commend him to your affectionate care if he deserves it, but my servants I commend to you unreservedly with all my heart. I have ventured to send you two stones which possess rare virtues for the health, desiring as I do that you may enjoy perfect health for many years to come; pray receive them from your dying sister-in-law, as a token of her deep affection for you.

"I will provide my servants with a letter for you. For the salvation of my soul, in whose behalf it will be expended, I trust that you will order a part of your indebtedness to me to be paid; I conjure you to do so by the honor of Jesus Christ, to whom I will pray tomorrow on the scaffold that you may furnish me with the wherewithal to endow an obit, and to bestow the necessary alms.

"Wednesday, two o'clock after midnight."

"Your affectionate sister,

"MARIE R. ——."

The Queen had copies made at once of all these various documents, including her will, and signed them all, so that if the originals fell into the hands of her keepers the others might still reach their destination. Bourgoin suggested that it was inadvisable to be in such haste to finish and seal them, as it was very possible that in the course of two or three hours she might think of something that she would like to add. But Mary did not adopt the suggestion, for she said that she was sure that she had forgotten nothing, and even if she had, she had no time left for anything but prayer and searching her conscience. She placed all her belongings in the drawers of a wardrobe, and handed the key to Bourgoin. A foot-bath was then brought her, and she remained in it for about ten minutes, and then went to bed, but not apparently to sleep, for her attendants observed that she was constantly repeating prayers, with brief intervals of rapt meditation.

She had long been in the habit of having one of her women read to her the story of some saint, after her evening devotions, and she chose not to depart from that practice on this occasion. After hesitating which of several to choose at such a crisis, she chose the greatest sinner of all, the thief who was crucified with Christ.

"For all he was so great a sinner," she said humbly, "his sins were less heinous than mine, and so I will pray to him to remember the passion of Jesus Christ, and have pity upon me, even as our Blessed Lord had pity upon him."

When the reading was at an end she asked to have all her handkerchiefs brought to her, and selected the most beautiful one among them, which was of the finest cambric, embroidered with gold, for a bandage for her eyes.

At daybreak, having but two hours more to live, she rose and began to dress; but before she was fully dressed Bourgoin came in and begged Mary to send for all of her retainers who were not present the night before, and read her will over to them, because he feared that otherwise some of them might, if they chanced to be disappointed with its contents, accuse those who were present of having influenced the Queen to increase their portions at the expense of their absent fellows.

The Queen at once adopted his suggestion; she sent for all her servitors and read her will to them, saying that it was her voluntary act, that it fully expressed her wishes, and was written throughout and signed with her own hand; she therefore begged them all to do all that lay in their power to secure its execution without omission or change. Every one of them gave the promise she asked, and she then handed it to Bourgoin, charging him to place it in the hands of M. de Guise, her principal executor, together with her letters to the King, and her most important papers. Then she asked for the casket wherein she had placed the purses of which we spoke above, and opened them one after another; and as she saw by the slip she had placed in each for whom it was intended, she passed it to that person with her own hand, no one of the recipients knowing what the purse contained. The gifts varied from twenty to three hundred crowns, no one receiving less than the smaller nor more than the larger of those amounts.

To these sums she added seven hundred pounds to be given to the poor—two hundred to those in England and five hundred to those in France,—and to each man in her suite she gave two rose nobles to be distributed in alms at his discretion. Lastly, she gave a hundred and

fifty crowns to Bourgoin, to be divided among them all when they separated.

Thus some twenty-six or twenty-seven persons received remembrances in money.

The Queen did all these various things with perfect serenity and without the slightest change of expression; indeed, it was as if she were simply preparing for a journey or a change of abode. She took leave of her servants once more, with words of cheer, enjoining them to live at peace with one another, and all the while she was completing her toilet and doing her best to make herself as beautiful as possible.

When her toilette was made she went from her bedroom to the ante-room, where there was a covered altar at which her chaplain was accustomed to say mass before she was deprived of his services. She knelt upon the steps, surrounded by all her servants and began the prayers of the communion service. She then took from a golden box a wafer consecrated by Pope Pius V., which she had preserved with the greatest care to be used at her death; she passed it to Bourgoin and bade him perform the functions of priest, as he was the oldest of her servitors, and age is a venerable and holy thing. Thus, in the face of all the pains taken to deprive her of that consolation, did the Queen receive the blessed sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Upon the conclusion of this ceremony, Bourgoin informed the Queen that in making her will she had forgotten three persons, Mademoiselle Beauregard, Mademoiselle de Montbrun, and her chaplain. Mary was greatly surprised at her forgetfulness, which was altogether unintentional, and at once inserted her wishes in their regard upon the first blank space in her will. Then she knelt again, and resumed her prayers, but

almost immediately rose again as she found the kneeling posture a very painful one. Bourgoin sent for a little bread and wine, and she ate and drank. When she had done, she gave him her hand and thanked him for being present, as usual, at her last earthly repast. Having thus renewed her strength, she knelt again to pray.

She had no more than begun when some one knocked at her door. Mary realized what it meant, but as she had not finished her devotions, she begged them who had come for her to wait an instant, and promised to be ready in a very short time.

The Earls of Kent and Shrewsbury, recalling the resistance she had made when she was required to go before the commissioners, ordered a number of guards up into the ante-room, where they were awaiting, so that they might be prepared to remove her by force if such a course were made necessary by her own refusal to go with them voluntarily, or by any movement on the part of her friends to detain her. It is not true, however, that the two noblemen insisted on entering her chamber, as some writers have stated. They set foot in her chamber but once, and that was when they came to read her sentence to her on the occasion we have described.

They waited some minutes in accordance with the Queen's request, but about eight o'clock they knocked again, the guards being at their backs. To their great surprise the door was opened at once, and they found Mary still kneeling and praying.

Thereupon Sir Thomas Andrew, the then Sheriff of Northamptonshire, entered alone with a white staff in his hand, and as they all remained on their knees, he walked slowly the whole length of the room and halted behind the Queen. He stood there an instant and then said, as Mary did not seem to see him:

"Madame, I come from their Lordships."

At that the Queen at once rose to her feet, leaving her prayer unfinished.

"Let us go," she said, and made ready to follow him; whereupon Bourgoin took down the ebony cross with a Christ in ivory upon it from above the altar, and said to her:

"Madame, do you not wish to take this little crucifix with you?"

"Thanks for the reminder," Mary replied; "I intended to take it, but had forgotten."

She gave it to Annibal Stewart, her valet, to be passed to her at such time as she should ask for it, and walked toward the door, leaning heavily upon Bourgoin, because of severe pains in her legs. But when they were near the door he suddenly withdrew his arm.

"Madame," he said, "your Majesty knows whether we love you, and whether each one of us here present would be glad to obey you, even should you command us to die for you; but I, for one, have not the courage to support you farther; nor, indeed, is it fitting that we, who ought to defend you so long as we have a drop of blood left to shed, should seem to betray you by delivering you thus into the hands of the infamous English."

"You are right, Bourgoin," said the Queen; "and then, too, my death would be a sad spectacle for you, and one which I ought not to inflict upon your years and your affection. Sir Sheriff," she added, "summon some one to support me, for you see that I cannot walk."

The Sheriff bowed, and motioned to two guards, whom he had secreted behind the door to lend him a hand in case the Queen should resist, to draw near and support her, which they instantly did. She then walked on, preceded and followed by her servants, weeping and

wringing their hands. But at the second door they were stopped by other guards, who said that they could go no farther. They cried out with one voice against such an order, reminding the guards that they had for nineteen years shared the Queen's imprisonment, and had accompanied her wherever she went, and that it was a terrible thing to deprive their mistress of their services at the last moment of her life, and that the order was issued doubtless for no other reason than to prevent their witnessing some abominable torture which they proposed to inflict upon her.

Bourgoin, who was at their head, seeing that neither threats nor prayers were of the slightest avail, requested speech of the Earls; but that request received no more attention than the previous ones, and when the servants tried to force their way by, the guards beat them back with the butts of their arquebuses.

"It is cruel of you," said the Queen, raising her voice, "to forbid my servants following me, and I begin to believe, as they do, that you have some evil design upon me, aside from my death."

"Madame," the Sheriff replied, "four of your servants are assigned to attend you, and no more; when you have gone down, those four will be sent for and will then join you."

"What!" the Queen exclaimed, "not even the four persons assigned to that duty are allowed to follow me now?"

"Such are the Earls' orders, Madame," the Sheriff replied, "and to my great regret, I cannot depart from them."

The Queen then turned to them and took the crucifix from Annibal Stewart with one hand and with the other her book of hours and her handkerchief.

"My children," she said, "this is one more grief added to the griefs we already have; let us bear it like Christians and offer this new sacrifice to Almighty God."

As she spoke, cries and sobs burst out on all sides; the wretched servants fell on their knees, and while some rolled on the floor and tore their hair in their despair, others kissed her hands and her feet, and the hem of her dress, asking her forgiveness for anything that she might have to reproach them for, calling her their mother, and bidding her adieu.

But at last the Sheriff, thinking doubtless that the scene had already lasted too long, waved his hand, whereupon the guards thrust them all, men and women alike, back into the room and closed the door upon them; but, even through the closed door, the Queen could hear their cries and lamentations, which seemed determined to go with her to the scaffold, despite the guards.

At the top of the staircase the Queen found Andrew Melville awaiting her; he was her maître d'hotel, who had been long separated from her, and had succeeded in obtaining leave to see her once more at the moment of her death. The Queen quickened her pace as she approached him, and knelt at his feet to receive his blessing, which he gave her through his fast-flowing tears.

"Melville," she said, still kneeling, "be as faithful a servant to my son as thou hast been to me; go to him immediately upon my death and describe it to him in all its details; tell him that I wish him every earthly blessing, and that I pray God to send down His Holy Spirit upon him."

"Madame," Melville replied, "that is surely the saddest mission with which a man could be entrusted; but no matter, I will faithfully execute it, I swear to you."

"What sayest thou, Melville?" rejoined the Queen, rising; "what better news, on the contrary, couldst thou bear to him than that I am at last delivered from all my suffering? Say to him that he ought to rejoice that the woes of Mary Stuart are ended; say to him that I die a Catholic, steadfast in my faith, a true Scotchwoman and a true Frenchwoman, and that I forgive those who are responsible for my death. Say to him that it has always been my wish that England and Scotland should be united; say to him finally that I have done nothing which could injure his realm, nor prejudice his standing as a sovereign prince. And so, my good Melville, farewell until we meet again in heaven."

Leaning on the arm of the old man, whose face was bathed in tears, she descended the staircase and was met at its foot by the two Earls, Lord Henry Talbot, son of Lord Shrewsbury, Sir Amyas Paulet, Sir Drew Drury, Robert Beale and many other gentlemen of the county. She walked toward them without haughtiness, but equally without humility, and complained that her servants had been refused permission to accompany her, at the same time renewing her request that such permission be granted. The Earls conferred together for a moment, after which the Earl of Kent asked who they were whose presence she desired, and said that she might select six.

The Queen thereupon designated Bourgoin, Gorjon, Gervais, and Didier among the men, and Jane Kennedy, and Elspeth Curle among the women, they being her especial favorites, although the last named was the sister of the secretary who betrayed her. But at that point a new difficulty arose, the Earls saying that the permission did not extend to women, for women were not used to such spectacles, and when they were admitted to them

they invariably made the welkin ring with their cries and lamentations, and as soon as the axe had fallen, darted to the scaffold to stanch the flow of blood with their handkerchiefs, all of which was highly improper.

"Gentlemen," said the Queen, "I will promise for my servants that they will do none of these things which your honors fear. Alas! poor creatures! they will be very glad to bid me adieu, and I trust that your mistress, a queen and a virgin, and therefore keenly alive to the honor of her sex, gave you no such restricted commission that you are not empowered to grant me the trifling concession that I ask; especially," she added, with a most sorrowful accent, "as some little respect should be shown to my rank. For I am the cousin of your Queen, grand-daughter of Henry VII., Queen Dowager of France and anointed Queen of Scotland."

The Lords thereupon conferred again for a moment, and ended by granting her request. Two guards at once went up to fetch the persons named.

Mary went on toward the main hall, supported by two of Sir Amyas Paulet's suite, accompanied and followed by the Earls and gentlemen, the Sheriff leading the procession, and Sir Andrew Melville carrying her train.

Her toilette, upon which, as we have said, she had bestowed all the care that she had it in her power to do, consisted of a head-dress of fine cambric, trimmed with lace, with a lace veil thrown back over her shoulder and falling to the floor; a mantle of black satin, lined with black taffeta and trimmed in front with sable, with a long train and flowing sleeves which hung down almost to the floor; the buttons were of jet in the shape of acorns and surrounded with small pearls; the collar was cut *à l'Italienne*. She wore a doublet of black-figured

satin, and beneath it a waist of crimson satin, laced behind, and trimmed with velvet of the same color. Around her neck was a string of scented balls, with a golden crucifix, and two rosaries hung at her girdle. In such guise did she enter the great hall where the scaffold was erected.

It was a wooden platform some two feet from the floor, and twelve feet square, surrounded by a railing and covered with black serge; upon the platform were a low stool, a cushion for her to kneel upon, and a block, which was likewise covered with black cloth. As she placed her foot upon the fatal planks after ascending the two steps, the headsman came to meet her, and knelt upon one knee to ask her forgiveness for the act he was about to perform, holding his axe behind him as he did so; but he did not succeed in hiding it from Mary, who cried out as soon as she saw it:

"Ah, I would greatly have preferred to be beheaded with a sword in the French fashion!"

"It is not my fault, Madame," said the executioner, "that this last wish of your Majesty may not be gratified; for I was not ordered to bring a sword," and finding naught here but this axe, I must needs use it. Will that prevent you forgiving me?"

"I forgive you, my good fellow," said Mary, "and see, I give you my hand to kiss."

Having put his lips to the Queen's hand, the man rose and placed the stool beside her. Mary took her seat upon it, the Earls of Kent and Shrewsbury stood at her left, the Sheriff and the headsman in front of her, Sir Amyas Paulet behind, and outside the railing lords, knights and gentlemen to the number of two hundred and fifty or more. Beale then began to read for the second time, the decree of condemnation. Just as

he read the first words, those of the Queen's servants who had been sent for, entered the hall, and took their places behind the scaffold, the men standing on a bench against the wall, and the two women kneeling in front of the bench; at the same moment a little spaniel, of which the Queen was very fond, stole noiselessly upon the platform as if he feared to be driven away, and lay down beside his mistress.

Mary listened to the reading of the sentence somewhat listlessly, as if it concerned any other than herself, and her expression throughout was as tranquil, yes, as joyous as if it were a pardon, and not a death-warrant. When Beale had read it through, and cried: "God save Queen Elizabeth!" without evoking any response, Mary crossed herself, and stood erect, with no change of countenance, except that she seemed lovelier than ever.

"My Lords," she said, "I was born a Queen, a sovereign princess, not subject to the laws—nearly akin to the Queen of England, and her lawful successor. I have been long a prisoner in this land; I have endured here much suffering and much wrong, which no one had the right to inflict upon me, and now, to crown it all, I am to lose my life. Bear ye witness, my Lords, that I die in the Catholic faith, praising God for that He permits me to die in His sacred cause, and protesting to-day as always, in public as in private, that I have never conspired to bring about, consented to, or desired the death of the Queen, nor any injury whatsoever to her person; but that I have, on the contrary, always loved her, and have always offered her fair and reasonable conditions upon which the discord which rends her kingdom might be appeased, and I restored to liberty; and all this I have done my Lords, as you well know, without having ever had the honor of receiving a reply from

her. At last my enemies have achieved their purpose, which was to compass my death; I forgive them nevertheless, as I forgive all those who have plotted against me, or wished me ill. After my death it will be known who contrived it and persisted in bringing it to pass. But I die with no accusation on my lips, lest the Lord hear and avenge me."

Thereupon, whether because he feared that such an harangue by so exalted and so lovely a woman might have too great an effect upon the assemblage, or because so many words caused too great delay, the Dean of Peterborough took his stand in front of Mary, leaning upon the barrier.

"Madame," he began, "my honored mistress bade me come to you ——."

He got no farther than this, when Mary turned and broke in upon him:

"Sir Dean," she said firmly, "I have naught to do with you; I do not wish to listen to you, and I beg you to desist."

"Madame," returned the Dean, persisting in the face of her firm and clearly expressed determination, "you have but an instant; change your opinions, abjure your false doctrines, and rest your faith on Jesus Christ alone, that through Him you may be saved."

"All that you can say is of no avail," the Queen replied, "and you will gain nothing by it; cease your speech, therefore, I beg you, and let me die in peace."

As she saw that he proposed to continue, she sat down upon the other side of the stool, turning her back upon him; but the Dean at once made the circuit of the scaffold until he was once more facing her. But when he opened his mouth to speak, the Queen turned back to position she first occupied.

"Madame," then said the Earl of Shrewsbury, "I am in despair to find that you are so wedded to the follies of popery; permit us to pray for you, we beg."

"If you choose to pray for me, my Lord," the Queen replied, "I thank you, for your intention is kind; but I cannot join in your prayers, for we are not of the same religion."

Thereupon the Earls called the Dean, and while the Queen upon her stool was praying in an undertone, he knelt upon the steps of the scaffold, and prayed at the top of his voice, followed by the whole assemblage except Mary and her servants. In the middle of her prayer, which she was repeating with an *Agnus Dei* around her neck, a crucifix in one hand, and her book of hours in the other, she suddenly slid to the floor and knelt there, praying aloud in Latin, while the others were praying in English; and when they paused, she began in English, so that they might understand her, praying for the afflicted Church of Christ, for an end to the persecution of the Catholics, and for God's blessing upon the reign of her son. She went on to say with the utmost fervor that she hoped to be saved by the merits of Jesus Christ, at the foot of whose cross she was about to pour out her blood.

At that, the Earl of Kent could contain himself no longer.

"Zounds, Madame," he exclaimed, without respect for the solemnity of the moment, "take Jesus Christ into your heart, and cast out all this papistical trumpery!"

But she went on, without noticing him, imploring the blessed saints to intercede with God in her behalf.

"Lord! Lord!" she cried, kissing the crucifix, "take

me to Thy arms outstretched upon the cross, and forgive all my sins."

Again she took her seat upon the stool, and the Earl of Kent then asked her if she had no confession to make; she replied that, as she had committed no crime, any confession she might make would be a falsehood pure and simple.

"Very well, Madame," said the Earl, "if that be so, prepare to die."

The Queen arose, and said to the headsman as he approached to remove her clothing:

"Let me do it, my friend; I know better than you how it should be done, and I am not accustomed to being undressed before so large a company nor by such attendants."

She called her two women and began to remove the pins from her head-dress. As they assisted their mistress to disrobe for the last time they could not keep back the hot tears which rose to their eyes.

"Do not weep," said Mary, in French, "for I gave my word that you would not."

As she spoke she made the sign of the cross on the forehead of each of them, kissed them both, and bade them pray for her.

She then began to remove her clothing, assisting her women as she was in the habit of doing when she retired at night; she took the gold crucifix from her neck and was about to give it to Jane, saying to the executioner:

"My friend, I know that everything I have upon me belongs to you, but you have no use for this, so let me give it to Mademoiselle, I beg, and she will pay you its value twice over in money."

But the executioner hardly allowed her to finish her sentence, ere he snatched it from her hands.

"It's my perquisite," he said.

The Queen manifested no emotion at his brutality, but continued to remove her clothing until she had on nothing but an under-petticoat. She then sat down again upon the stool, and Jane Kennedy took from her pocket the cambric handkerchief she selected the night before, and bandaged her eyes with it, to the great surprise of the Earls, Lords and gentlemen present, as such was not the custom in England.

Mary supposed that she was to be beheaded by the French method, that is, as she sat upon the stool; so she set perfectly erect with her neck stiff, to make the headsman's task the easier, while he, uncertain how to act, stood with his axe in his hand, but did not strike. At last his assistant laid hold of the Queen's head and drew her forward until she fell upon her knees. She then seemed to realize what was expected of her, and groped around for the block with her hands, still holding in one of them her book of hours, and in the other her crucifix. When she found it, she laid her neck upon it, and placed her clasped hands under her chin, as if to pray until the last moment, but the assistant drew them away lest they might be cut off with her head.

As Mary exclaimed: "*In manus tuas, Domine,*" the executioner raised his axe, which was of the common wood-cutting description, and struck the first blow; but he aimed too high, and the blade entered the skull, causing the book and the crucifix to fall from the sufferer's hand but not detaching the head. However, the Queen was stunned by the blow and did not move, so that the executioner could prepare for the second blow at his leisure; but even then the head did not fall, and a third blow was necessary to sever a shred of flesh which still held it on the shoulders. At last the head was fairly

severed, and the headsman held it up to the gaze of the assemblage, exclaiming:

"God save Queen Elizabeth!"

"So perish all her Majesty's foes!" rejoined the Dean of Peterborough.

"Amen!" said the Earl of Kent; but he was the only one; every other voice was choked with tears and sobbing.

At that moment the Queen's head-dress fell off, and they could see her hair, cut very short, and as white as that of a woman of seventy. Her face had changed so during her agony that it had become unrecognizable. The sight evoked exclamations of horror, for the eyes were open, and the lips moving as if they were still in prayer. This nervous movement lasted above quarter of an hour after her head was severed from her body.

The Queen's faithful servants rushed upon the scaffold, and gathered up the book of hours and the crucifix as priceless relics. Jane Kennedy remembered the little dog, and looked about on all sides for him, calling him by name, but he had disappeared.

A moment later, as one of the executioners was untying the Queen's garters, which were of blue satin embroidered with silver, he spied the poor little creature hiding in her petticoat, whence he had to be removed by force; the next moment he escaped from his grasp again and lay down between his mistress' shoulders and the head, which had been deposited beside the body. Jane took him then, not heeding his piteous cries, and carried him away, all covered, as he was, with blood, for the order had been given for everybody to leave the room. Bourgoin and Gervais remained behind, begging Sir Amyas Paulet to allow them to remove the Queen's heart, so that they could take it to France, as they had

promised her, but their request was roughly refused, and they were pushed out of the room, all the doors of which were closed, leaving the corpse and the executioner together.

Brantôme asserts that a horrible deed was then perpetrated.

Two hours after the execution the body and the head were taken to the same room in which Mary Stuart was made to appear before the commissioners, and placed upon the table at which those functionaries were seated on that occasion. They were covered with a black cloth, and remained there until three in the afternoon, at which time, Nater, a physician of Standford, and the surgeon of the village of Fotheringay came to open and embalm it. This they did indifferently well in the presence of Sir Amyas Paulet and the soldiers, without a shadow of consideration for the rank or the sex of the hapless creature, whose body was thus freely exposed to the gaze of all who chose to look upon it. Nor did this indignity serve the purpose sought to be served, for there was a rumor that the Queen's legs were swollen and that she was dropsical, while there was not one of those present who was not forced to confess that he had never seen a young maiden's body more spotless and beautiful than Mary Stuart's, as she lay dead by violence after nineteen years of captivity and suffering.

When the body was opened the spleen was found to be in a healthy condition, the lungs a little yellowish in spots, and the brain a sixth larger than the average size of that organ in females of the same age. Everything promised long life to her whose days had been so cruelly cut short.

A formal report of the execution having been drawn,

the body was embalmed, and placed in a leaden coffin, and that in another of wood, which was left upon the table until the first day of August—nearly five months, that is to say,—and during all that time no one was permitted to go near it. When it was discovered that Mary's ill-starred servants, who were still held as prisoners, were in the habit of going to gaze at it through the keyhole, the hole was obstructed in such a way that they could not catch a glimpse even of the casket which held the body of the mistress they had loved so dearly.

Meanwhile, an hour after Mary Stuart's death, Henry Talbot, who was among those present, set out at full speed for London, bearing to Elizabeth the glad intelligence that her rival had ceased to live. True to her character, Elizabeth expressed her grief and indignation in unmeasured terms; she said that her orders had been misunderstood, that they had been too hasty, and that it was all the fault of Secretary of State Davison, to whom she had given the warrant to retain until she should make up her mind, and not to be sent to Fotheringay. Consequently poor Davison was sent to the Tower, and sentenced to pay a fine of ten thousand pounds sterling for failing to consider the Queen's scruples.

While her grief was at its height, however, an embargo was placed upon all vessels in the various ports of the kingdom so that the news of the Queen of Scotland's death might not be carried to foreign countries, especially France, except by adroit emissaries, who could make it appear in a less unfavorable light for Elizabeth. At the same time the shameful popular rejoicings which greeted the promulgation of the sentence of death were repeated in celebration of the news of the execution. All London was illuminated, bonfires were lighted before

the doors, and public excitement rose to such a pitch that they broke into the French embassy and took the furniture to feed the fires when they began to die out.

M. de Chateauneuf was still barricaded in the embassy, not yet recovered from his consternation at the outrage, when he received an invitation from Elizabeth, a fortnight after it occurred, to visit her at the country seat of the Archbishop of Canterbury. M. de Chateauneuf went thither with a definite purpose of not lisping a word concerning what had taken place; but as soon as he appeared, Elizabeth, who was dressed in black, rose and went to meet him. She overwhelmed him with kindness, and said that she was prepared to place all her available forces at the disposal of Henri III., to assist him to put down the League.

Chateauneuf received all her offers with a stern, cold expression, persevering in his intention of saying nothing concerning the event which had caused them both to wear mourning garb. But she took his hand and led him aside, and said, with sighs that shook her whole frame:

"Ah! Monsieur, since I last saw you, I have suffered the greatest misfortune which could have come upon me. I refer to the death of my good sister, the Queen of Scotland, of which I swear by God Himself, by my soul, and my hopes of salvation, that I am absolutely guiltless. I signed the warrant, it is true; but some of my council put a trick upon me which I cannot forgive; and I swear to God that, were it not for the long years they have been in my service, I would have cut off their heads. I have a woman's body, Monsieur, but in that woman's body there is a man's heart."

Chateauneuf bowed without replying; but his letter

the body was embalmed, and placed in a leaden coffin, and that in another of wood, which was left upon the table until the first day of August—nearly five months, that is to say,—and during all that time no one was permitted to go near it. When it was discovered that Mary's ill-starred servants, who were still held as prisoners, were in the habit of going to gaze at it through the keyhole, the hole was obstructed in such a way that they could not catch a glimpse even of the casket which held the body of the mistress they had loved so dearly.

Meanwhile, an hour after Mary Stuart's death, Henry Talbot, who was among those present, set out at full speed for London, bearing to Elizabeth the glad intelligence that her rival had ceased to live. True to her character, Elizabeth expressed her grief and indignation in unmeasured terms; she said that her orders had been misunderstood, that they had been too hasty, and that it was all the fault of Secretary of State Davison, to whom she had given the warrant to retain until she should make up her mind, and not to be sent to Fotheringay. Consequently poor Davison was sent to the Tower, and sentenced to pay a fine of ten thousand pounds sterling for failing to consider the Queen's scruples.

While her grief was at its height, however, an embargo was placed upon all vessels in the various ports of the kingdom so that the news of the Queen of Scotland's death might not be carried to foreign countries, especially France, except by adroit emissaries, who could make it appear in a less unfavorable light for Elizabeth. At the same time the shameful popular rejoicings which greeted the promulgation of the sentence of death were repeated in celebration of the news of the execution. All London was illuminated, bonfires were lighted before

the doors, and public excitement rose to such a pitch that they broke into the French embassy and took the furniture to feed the fires when they began to die out.

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to Henri III., and the latter's response show that neither of them was for a single instant the dupe of this female Tiberius.

Meanwhile, as we have seen, the Queen's unfortunate servants were held in captivity, and the disfigured body remained in the great hall, awaiting royal burial. Matters were left at that point, as Elizabeth said, to give her time to prepare a grand funeral for her "good sister Mary," but the real reason was that she did not dare to have the public, royal burial follow so close upon the secret, infamous death. Furthermore, was it not essential that such reports as it pleased Elizabeth to put in circulation should have time to gain credence before the real truth should become known from the lips of Mary's retainers? for the Queen hoped that when this slothful world had once formed an opinion as to the death of the Queen of Scotland, it would not go to the trouble of changing it. It was not until the keepers were as weary as the prisoners, that Elizabeth, having received a report to the effect that the poorly embalmed body could be kept no longer, at last issued orders that the obsequies should take place.

On the first day of August tailors and dressmakers arrived at Fotheringay Castle, sent by Elizabeth, with black cloth and black silk, to provide all Mary's servants with mourning. But they declined, for, as they did not anticipate such generosity on the part of the Queen of England, they had provided their own mourning at their own expense immediately upon their mistress' death. The tailors and dressmakers set to work none the less, and to such good purpose that everything was completed on the seventh.

On the following evening, about eight o'clock, a large vehicle covered with black velvet, and drawn by four

horses with black trappings, stopped before the gate of Fotheringay Castle. The vehicle was adorned with small streamers, on which were embroidered the arms of Scotland, which were the Queen's, and the arms of Aragon, which were Darnley's.

It was followed by the King-at-Arms and twenty mounted gentlemen, with their retainers and lackeys, all dressed in black. The King-at-Arms dismounted and with his whole suite went up to the hall where the body lay and caused it to be taken down and placed in the hearse with all possible respect, the whole party being bareheaded and preserving absolute silence.

This transaction caused great excitement among the prisoners, who at once took counsel together as to the propriety of expressing their wish to attend the body of their mistress, on the ground that they could not bear the thought of its being taken away without them; but just as they were on the point of sending to request an interview with the King-at-Arms, that dignitary entered the room where they were and informed them that he was instructed by his august mistress, the Queen of England, to do honor to the late Queen of Scotland with the most magnificent funeral within his power to arrange. He said that he was most anxious to show himself worthy of so honorable a mission, and had already made a great part of his preparations for the ceremony which was to take place on the tenth of August, the second day thereafter; that, inasmuch as the leaden casket which contained the body was very heavy, it was thought best to take it that night to the place where the grave had been dug, rather than to wait until the day fixed for the burial; thus they had no occasion for alarm, as this removal of the casket was merely a preliminary measure. He went on to say,

however, that if a few of them chose to accompany the body to see what disposition was made of it, they were quite free to do so, and the others could follow the pall, it being Elizabeth's explicit command that all of them, from the first to the last, should be present at the funeral ceremonies.

This assurance eased the minds of the unhappy prisoners, who deputed Bourgoin, Gervais, and six others to be selected by them to follow the body; they selected Andrew Melville, Stewart, Gorjon, Howard, Lauder, and Nicolas Delamarre.

At ten o'clock at night they set out, marching behind the vehicle, preceded by the King-at-Arms, accompanied by footmen carrying torches, and followed by the twenty gentlemen and their retainers. At two o'clock in the morning they arrived at Peterborough, where there is a magnificent cathedral, erected by one of the old Saxon kings, in which Catherine of Aragon, wife of Henry VIII. was buried, on the left side of the choir. Her tomb was still adorned with a canopy bearing her crest.

They found the edifice draped in black, and a structure erected in the centre of the choir, after the fashion of the *chapelles ardentes* in France, except that it was not surrounded by lighted candles. It was covered with black velvet, embroidered with the arms of Scotland and Aragon, which were also repeated on streamers similar to those on the funeral car. The resting-place for the pall was already prepared beneath this structure; it was a bier covered with black velvet, fringed with silver, and upon it was a pillow covered with similar material on which lay a crown. To the right of the bier, and opposite the sepulchre of Catherine of Aragon, a grave had been dug for Mary of Scotland; it was of brick and so constructed that it could be covered

subsequently with a marble slab, or a tomb be built over it. The casket was now to be placed therein, and the Bishop of Peterborough was awaiting it at the door to officiate at that ceremony; he was clad in his Episcopal robes, without mitre, cross or cope, and was accompanied by his Dean and some other ministers.

The body was borne into the church without music or prayer, and lowered into the grave, amid the most profound silence. As soon as it was in place, the masons resumed their interrupted work, and filled in the grave level with the surrounding earth, leaving only an aperture a foot and a half in length, through which one could see what was within, and throw in upon the casket, as was the custom at the obsequies of royal personages, the broken staves of their high officers of state, and ensigns and banners bearing the arms of the deceased.

When this nocturnal ceremony was at an end, Bourgoin, Melville, and the others were escorted to the Bishop's palace, where all those appointed to attend the final obsequies were to assemble, to the number of more than three hundred and fifty, all of whom, with the exception of the late Queen's servants were selected from the officers of justice, and the Protestant nobility and clergy.

On Thursday, August 9, the banquet halls of the palace were hung with rich and sumptuous black drapery, before Melville, Bourgoin, and the others, whose presence was desired, not so much to afford them the satisfaction of witnessing the interment of Queen Mary, as to make them witnesses of the magnificence of Queen Elizabeth. But, as can readily be imagined, the luckless prisoners showed but little warmth at this ostentatious display, little as they anticipated it.

On Friday, August 10, all those deputed to attend

the obsequies, having assembled at the palace, they formed in procession and marched to the Cathedral, which was close at hand. When they arrived, they took the positions assigned them in the choir, and the choristers at once began to intone the funeral service in English, according to the prescribed Protestant ritual. At the first words of the service, when he found that it was not performed by Catholic priests, Bourgoin left the Cathedral, vowing that he would not sanction such sacrilege with his presence, he was followed by all of Mary's retainers, men and women alike, except Melville and Maubray, who reasoned that in whatever tongue prayers were uttered, they were heard by the Lord. Their exit caused unbounded comment, but the Bishop preached his sermon none the less.

When the sermon was ended the King-at-Arms sought out Bourgoin and his companions who were walking in the cloisters, and informed them that the holy communion was about to be celebrated, requesting them to take part therein. But they replied that as they were Catholics they could not partake of the communion at an altar of which they did not approve.

The King-at-Arms returned, much annoyed that the ceremonies should be marred by their bigotry, but the sacrament was administered none the less.

He then made a last attempt, and sent word to them that the religious services were at an end, and they could therefore venture to return and be present at the royal ceremonies which had no connection with any form of worship. They agreed with him in that regard, but when they arrived, the staves of office were already broken, and with the banners thrown into the opening which the workmen were closing up.

The procession returned to the Bishop's palace in the

same order, and there a sumptuous funeral banquet was spread. By a curious freak, Elizabeth, who after punishing the living as a criminal, heaped royal honors upon the dead, was determined that her rival's servitors, whom she had forgotten so long, should be the guests of honor at this funeral feast. But they naturally did not lend themselves readily to her purpose; they manifested no amazement at the magnificence of the appointments, nor gratification at the good cheer, but moistened their bread with their tears, and made no other reply to the questions asked them and the attentions lavished upon them.

Immediately upon the conclusion of the feast, they quitted Peterborough and journeyed back to Fotheringay where they learned that they were free at last to go whithersoever they chose. They did not wait to be told twice, for they were living in ceaseless dread, and considered their lives in danger so long as they remained in England. They therefore at once collected all their belongings and took their departure on foot from Fotheringay Castle on Monday, August 13, 1587.

Bourgoin was the last to leave and when he reached the further side of the drawbridge he turned about. Christian, though he was, he could not forgive Elizabeth, not his own sufferings, but those of his mistress; so he turned about and shook his clenched fists at the regicide walls, repeating in a loud and threatening voice these words of David:

"May the vengeance of the blood of Thy servants, which has been shed, O Lord, God, be welcome in Thy sight!"

The old man's malediction was heard, and inexorable history has assumed the task of punishing Elizabeth.

* * * * * * *

We remarked that the headsman's axe, when it embedded itself in Mary Stuart's skull, caused the crucifix and the book of hours to fall from her hands, and that they were picked up by some person or persons of her suite. We are unable to say what became of the crucifix, but the book of hours is at the Bibliothèque Royale, where it may be seen by those who are interested in historic souvenirs. Its authenticity is vouched for by two certificates, which we quote, inscribed upon one of the fly-leaves of the volume:

FIRST CERTIFICATE.

"We, the undersigned, *supérieur vicaire de l'étroite observance* of the Order of Cluny, certify that this book was delivered to us by order of the late Don Michel Nardin, a professed priest of our said order, who departed this life at our College of St. Martial of Avignon, on the 28th March, 1723, aged about eighty years, thirty of which he passed among us, leading a life of exemplary piety; he was a German by birth, and served a long while as an officer in the army.

"He was admitted at Cluny and took orders there, having laid aside all thought of worldly possessions and honors. He retained, with the permission of his superiors, this book only, which he knew to have been in constant use by Mary Stuart, Queen of England and Scotland, to the end of her life. Before his death separated him from his brethren, he asked that the book, in order that it might the more surely reach us, should be sent to us by post in a sealed package.

"In the same shape in which we received it, we have requested M. l'Abbé Bignon, Councillor of State, and Royal Librarian, to accept this precious souvenir of the

piety of a Queen of England and a German officer of her faith and ours.

"Signed, FRÈRE GERARD PONCET,
"*Supérieur Vicaire-Général.*"

SECOND CERTIFICATE.

"We, Jean Paul Bignon, Royal Librarian, are very glad of the opportunity to demonstrate our zeal for the religion by placing this manuscript in his Majesty's library.

"Signed JEAN PIERRE BIGNON.
"*8th July, 1721.*"

This manuscript, upon which the last glance of the hapless Queen of Scotland was fixed, is a duodecimo, written in Gothic characters, and containing Latin prayers; it is embellished with gilt miniatures in relief, representing devotional subjects, scenes from sacred history, or from the lives of the saints and martyrs. Each page has a border of arabesques, mingled with garlands of flowers and fruits, from which grotesque faces of men and animals peer out.

The binding, which is now much worn, consists of a black velvet cover, whose flat sides have, in the centre, a pansy in enamel, entangled in a catkin of silver; two silver-gilt cords, twisted and knotted, extend diagonally from corner to corner of the cover, with tassels at either end.

TESTAMENT OF MARY STUART.

Copy of the last will and of a memoire of the late Queen Mary Stuart, Queen of Scotland and Dowager of France, taken from the originals, written and signed with the Queen's own hand, the one on the day before, and the other on the very day of her death, which occurred February 8, 1587.

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost:

I, Mary, by the grace of God, Queen of Scotland and Dowager of France, being prepared to die, and being unable to make my will, do commit my last wishes to writing, intending and wishing that they may have the same force and effect as if they were put in proper form.

I declare that I die in the Catholic, Apostolic, Roman faith.

In the first place, I wish that a full service should be performed for the repose of my soul in the Church of Saint Denis in Paris, and another at Saint Peter's at Rheims, at which all my servants may be present in such manner as I have given instructions to those who have the matter in charge.

Also, that a yearly *obit* shall be founded, that prayers may be said for my soul forever in such place and manner as shall be deemed most suitable. To provide therefor, I desire my houses at Fontainebleau to be sold, trusting that, in addition thereto, the King, will assist herein, as requested in my memoire.

I desire my estate of Trepagny to pass to my cousin,

De Guise, for one of his daughters, if she should be married. I will remit half or a part of the arrearages due to me, on condition that the residue be paid to be employed by my executors in perpetual alms. The better to effect this result the papers should be found, so that legal proceedings may be instituted.

I desire, also, that the proceeds of my Secondat litigation be distributed as follows:

First, in payment of my debts and obligations hereinafter mentioned. And first of all, Curle's two thousand crowns, which I wish paid to him without demur, as they were to have been given to him upon his marriage; nor can Nan, or any other, demand any portion of it from him, whatever obligation he may hold, for it is only a pretence, and the money was mine and not borrowed; I simply caused it to be shown to him, and then withdrew it, and it was afterwards taken from me with the rest. Charteloy, which I give him, if he can recover it, as he was promised in payment of the four thousand crowns promised at my death, and a thousand for the marriage of one of his sisters, and having asked me for the rest for his expenses while in prison. As for the assignment of a like sum to Nan, it is not a matter of obligation; and it has always been my intention that it should be the last paid, and then only if nothing should appear to have been done contrary to the conditions on which I gave them to him, as my servants will bear witness.

As to the twelve hundred crowns which he borrowed for my service, six hundred from Beauregard, three hundred from Gervais, and the rest I know not where, he must repay them from his own store, and I be released therefrom and the obligation canceled; for I received none of it, but the whole is now in his coffers,

if they are not already paid. However that may be, that sum must be restored to me intact, as I have had none of it, and if it was paid, I ought to have recourse as for my own property; and then I desire that Pasquier shall account for the sums he has received and expended at Nan's bidding through the hands of the servants of M. de Chateauneuf, the French Ambassador.

I desire that my accounts be audited and my treasurer paid; also, that the wages and portions of my people, as well for the past year as the present, should all be paid before anything else, including pensions as well as wages (except Nan's and Curle's pensions) so far as it is possible to know what is coming to them, and what they have deserved at my hands in the way of pensions, unless Curle's wife is in necessitous circumstances, or is maltreated on my account; the same as to Nan's wages.

I desire that the twenty-four hundred francs I have given to Jane Kennedy shall be paid her in silver, as was provided in her first gift, whereby the pension of Volly (sic) Douglas will revert to me, which I give to Fontenay for his services and expenses, as yet unrewarded.

I desire that the four thousand crowns should be solicited and collected from the banker, whose name I have forgotten; but the Bishop of Glasgow will remember it, and if the first assignment is missing, I desire that one should be given upon the first avails of Secondat. The ten thousand francs which the Ambassador had received for me, I wish divided among my servants who are now leaving me, namely:

Two thousand francs to my physician;

Two thousand to Elizabeth Curle;

Two thousand to Sebastien Paiges;

Two thousand to Marie Paiges, my god-daughter;

To Beauregard, a thousand francs;

A thousand to Gorjon;

A thousand to Gervais.

From the other avails of my income and the residue from Secondat, and from all miscellaneous sources, I wish five thousand crowns to be employed in charity among the children of Rheims.

To my schoolmates, two thousand francs.

To the four beggars, such sum as may seem proper to my executors, according to the means they have at hand.

Five hundred francs to the hospitals.

To my chief cook, Martin, I give a thousand francs.

A thousand francs to Annibal, and I bequeath him to my cousin, De Guise, his god-father, to give him some place in his household for life.

I leave five hundred francs to Nicòlas, and five hundred for his daughters when they marry.

I leave five hundred francs to Robert Hamilton, and beg my son to take him, and Monsieur de Glasgow, or the Bishop of Ross.

I leave to Didier his clerkship, subject to the King's favor.

I give five hundred francs to Jean Lauder, and beg my cousin, De Guise, or Du Maine to take him into their service, and Messieurs de Glasgow and Ross to see to it that he is provided for. I desire his father's wages to be paid, and I leave him five hundred francs.

I desire that a thousand francs be paid to Gorjon for money and other things furnished me in time of need.

I desire, if Bourgoin makes the pilgrimage to Saint-Nicolas, which he has undertaken to make for me, that fifteen hundred francs be paid him on that account.

I leave six thousand francs to the Bishop of Glasgow, and three thousand to him of Ross, said sums being apportioned according to my limited means.

I leave my miscellaneous properties and seignorial rights to my godson, M. du Ruysseau's son.

I give three hundred francs to Laureny.

Also three hundred francs to Suzanne.

And I leave ten thousand francs to be distributed among the four who became sureties for me to the solicitor Varney.

I desire that the proceeds of the sale of the furniture, which I have ordered to be sold at London, be applied to defray the expenses of my servants' journey to France.

I leave my coach and horses to be used for the transportation of my maids, or to be sold as is most convenient to them.

There are about a hundred crowns of wages for previous years due to Bourgoin, and I wish them to be paid him.

I leave two thousand francs to Melville, my maître d'hotel.

I appoint my cousin, the Duc de Guise, principal executor of my will.

After him, the Bishop of Glasgow, the Bishop of Ross, and M. du Ruysseau, his chancellor.

It is my purpose that Le Préau shall continue without fail to enjoy his two prebends.

I commend my god-daughter, Marie Paiges to my cousin, Madame de Guise, and beg her to take her in her service, and my aunt, Madame de Saint-Pierre, to find some good place for Mowbray, or retain her in her own service, for the honor of God.

Done this 7th day of February, 1587.

And signed, MARIE, Queen.

MEMOIRE,

Or the Last Request which I make of the King, (Henri III. of France).

To pay me as well what he owes me on account of my pensions as the money advanced by the late Queen, my mother, in Scotland, for the service of the King, my father-in-law, in those regions; or, at least, so much thereof that an *obit* may be founded for the repose of my soul, and that the alms and trifling endowments promised by me may be provided for.

Also, that he will be pleased to permit my dowager's stipend to be paid a year after my death in order that my servants may be paid.

Also, if he so please, to allow them to receive their wages and pensions during their lives, as was done in the case of the officers of Queen Aliénor (sic).

Also, I beg him to receive my physician into his service, as he promised, and to hold him in esteem.

Also, that my chaplain may be restored to his profession, and, for my sake, provided with some little living where he may pray God for my soul during the remainder of his life.

Also, that Didier, an old retainer of my cuisine, to whom I have given a clerkship as a recompense, may enjoy it during his life, he being already very aged.

Done on the morning of my death, Wednesday, February 8, 1587.

And signed, MARIE, Queen.

Translation of Lines on Page 5.

I see her in her snow-white garb, in deep mourning and sad unto death, walking hither and thither, the very Goddess of Beauty; holding in her hand the shaft of her inhuman son, and Love, without frontlet, fluttering about her, concealing her fillet beneath a widow's veil, on which these words are written: "Die or become my slave."

Translation of Verses on Page 97.

1. Caves, meadows, mountains, plains, rocks, groves, and forests, streams, rivers and fountains, where I find myself wandering, overflowing with vague complaints and sobs, I long to sing of the wretched grief which causes my lamentation.

2. But who will be able to hear my sighs and groaning? Or who to understand my *ennui* and languor? Will it be this herbage, or the water beneath this bank, which, as it flows, carries with it the stream which pours from my face?

3. Alas! no, for the wound which looks for relief to unreasonable things, seeks in vain the healing balm. Much better is it that I should pour my plaint in bitter terms into thy ears, who hast brought this torture upon my heart.

4. O thou immortal goddess, pray, listen to my voice, thou, who holdest my faculties in tutelage under thy sway, so that if the springs of my life are dried up, thy cruelty may avow itself vanquished by thy beauty alone.

5. 'Tis plain that my face is gradually melting away

like cold ice in the fire's heat; and yet the flame of passion which scorches and consumes me never moves thy heart to any fellow feeling.

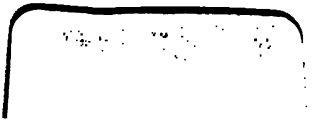
6. And yet these trees which stand about me, these rocks and marbles, are well aware of my emotion. In short, nothing in nature is ignorant of my suffering save alone thou, who feedest upon my cruel torment.

7. But if it is pleasant to thee to see me writhing in such agony, may my pitiable misery last forever!

Translation of Lines sent by Queen Mary to Elisabeth with her Letter. Page 167.

1. A single thought there is which comforts and torments me, and changes sweet to bitter without ceasing in my heart, as doubt and hope alternately oppress me—for peace and rest have long since taken flight.

2. Dear sister, if this letter bears the impress of the longing to see you which possesses me, it is because I abide in sorrow and distress, lest a happy result should not soon follow.

3. I have seen my bark forced to cast anchor in the deep, just on the point of sailing into port, and storm succeed fair weather.

4. Thus am I oppressed by anxiety and fear; not concerning you, but because Fortune so often wrongfully causes cables and double cordage to part.